

# THE GITA

RE-ARRANGED AND EXPLAINED

*BY*  
RAI SAHIB RAJ BANSI LAL

FIRST EDITION 1953



*Publishers :*  
**RAJ & SONS**  
Regal Lodge, Karol Bagh,  
**DELHI**

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Preface	1
Introduction	3
I The Story	11
II The Scene of Battle and the Preliminary Advice	16
III The Philosophy of the Gita	19
IV The Divine	54
The Avtar	71
VI God's manifestations (Vibhūtiḥ)	79
VII Para and Apra Praktities	88
VIII Puruṣa and Prakṛiti	102
IX Faith and Workship	111
X Svabhava and Svadharma	120
XI Sacrifice	134
XII Arjuna's Vision of the Divine	148
XIII Different Classes of people	158
XIV Buddhi Yoga	166
XV Path of Knowledge	181
XVI Path of Devotion	192
XVII Path of Works	210
XVIII Raj Yoga	241
Index	250

# STUDY THE GITA AND EXPOUND IT TO OTHERS

- (18)68—He who expounds this great secret to my devotees will be filled with intense devotion towards Me and will reach Me there is no doubt about it
- (18)69—No one among men can be found to do something more dear to Me and no one is more loved of Me in the world than such a man
- (18)70—Whoever meditates on this conversation (between Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna which forms the subject matter of the Gita) will be considered by Me as having worshipped Me by a sacrifice of knowledge
- (18)71—Similarly he who follows these teachings without cavil and with faith will be redeemed from all sin and reach the happiest spheres which await saintly people

## PLEASE NOTE

1. That the numerals before a verse denote chapter and number of the verse of the Gita. Thus (5)6 means that it is the sixth verse of the fifth chapter of the Gita.
2. That the verses of the Gita are written in bold type. The writings in ordinary type are by the author.
3. That the chapters in this book are by subjects and have no relation with the chapters of the Gita.
4. That the introduction in the beginning of a chapter gives a brief description and explanation in prose of the subject matter dealt within that chapter.
5. That the subject matter of a chapter is divided into main heads and sub-heads, and that appropriate verses of the Gita are entered, in order, so as to give a connected idea of the subject.
6. An index at the end of the book gives references of the Gita's verses in this book. All the verses of the Gita thus come in this book, in their proper places.

## PREFACE

The Gita is one of the best known books on religion, but it is also well known that very few people understand it. A religious book dealing with spiritual truths, is difficult to grasp without spiritual experiences and so gives considerable room for the play of human intellect. This applies to a greater degree to the Gita, for its teachings are graded, offering different bases of understanding for people at different stages of intellectual development and spiritual progress, so that every one can draw from this mine of knowledge, as much as his intellect or spiritual experience can permit. But an average reader finds it hard even to follow its main principles. The reasons for this are threefold. In the first place, the Gita was written in an age when people were familiar with the religious philosophies, on the basis of which the Gita has developed its own philosophy. With these philosophies the modern reader is generally unfamiliar and finds it hard to understand Gita's philosophy. In the second place, the style and order of writing 2500 years ago was different from what it is today, as it is bound to be. We are used to a definite plan in writing, an order in the arrangement of subjects and a straight-forward style which acquaints us with the object in the very beginning and works out systematically the conclusions which are stated at the end. The style of the Gita is almost opposed to it. In the third place, some of the verses seem to be recitals of certain Vedic rituals but are really meant to express truths of universal application. This is made clear only if we collect all the verses on one particular subject, from

the various places in which it is dealt with in the Gita and then study them attentively

An attempt has been made in this book to present the teachings of the Gita in a form which can easily be understood. The philosophy of the Sankhyas which forms the basis of the Gita's philosophy has been described in the beginning and then the philosophy of the Gita has been explained in detail. The different truths or subjects have been dealt with one by one in different chapters. An introduction in the beginning of a chapter gives a general explanation and scope of the subject in that chapter. The subject matter is divided into main heads and sub heads and appropriate verses inserted in their proper places. Detailed explanations of verses have been given wherever found necessary. In this way all the verses of the Gita come in the book in their proper places. An index gives the references where to find serial verses of the Gita in this book.

Thus while this book is only the Gita rearranged the order and the manner in which the different subjects are dealt with makes the teachings of the Gita easy to understand. The reader will discover many truths which have so far escaped his notice in his previous study of the Gita. He will have a much clearer idea of the different subjects than he had before. A reader who reads the Gita for the first time in this book will find it easy to understand. The reader will be led to have the right faith and if he makes an effort to apply the teachings of the Gita in his life he will soon meet with peace and success in this life and if he persists he will find an inner light guiding and hastening his progress towards perfection and liberation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Gita is a part of the great epic poem "The Mahabharata" written over 2500 years ago by Saint Vyasa. The subject matter of "The Mahabharata" is the history of the Kurus and Pandus, two branches of a royal family. The jealousy and strife between these two families led to the great battle of Kurukshetra in which all the princes of India had participated.

The occasion for the teachings of the Gita was this battle. The Pandus had been deprived of the throne of Hastinapur, the modern Delhi, by the machinations of the Kurus, which led to this battle. Lord Sri Krishna, traditionally an Avtar or Prophet had espoused the just cause of the Pandus and became the charioteer of Arjuna, the warrior Prince of the Pandus. On the eve of this battle, Arjuna asked Lord Sri Krishna to take his chariot between the two armies, so that he may have a view of the leaders of the army of the Kurus. There he found his near relatives, friends and teachers arrayed for the battle. Overcome by compassion for them, he laid down his arms. His faith in the moral code and in the duties of a warrior, which had been the guiding principles of his life, was suddenly shattered, and finding no basis for action, he supplicates Lord Sri Krishna to give him some standard for action. At first, Lord Sri Krishna repeats the commonplace rules of conduct and principles of existence, with which Arjuna was familiar. These however fail to remove Arjuna's doubts. The teacher then goes deeper into the Truths of the Divine, of human existence and

teaches him the fourfold path for attaining perfection. At the end he asks Arjuna whether his teachings had removed his doubts. The teachings had now completely removed Arjuna's delusion and he was firm in his resolve to fight the battle.

Every individual has to pass through similar critical periods in his life when he is confronted with duty on the one hand and feelings of compassion or hatred on the other. Unless we have strong faith in the Divine and in the truths of our existence we are liable to go astray and be further removed from our goal.

Our goal however is not the right performance of duties or the maintenance of peace and solidarity in the world. This is only a means to lead us to our perfection. Our goal is liberation from the cycles of birth and death or to attain the Divine Status. The society is meant for the individual and not the individual for the society. This world is a training ground for our perfection and liberation.

The Gita gives us a philosophy of the Divine and of our existence and also points to the paths leading to our perfection. Matters of Spirit however cannot be explained or grasped by the human intellect. The Gita founds its philosophy on the eternal rock of the spiritual experiences of saints who had realised the Reality. It presents its philosophy in such a way as to appeal to the human mind and command implicit faith. It reconciles the different trends of religious thought and transforms them into one whole philosophy broad and profound. There is nothing local or of temporary interest in the Gita. The truths preached by it 2500 years ago are as true to day as they were at that time.

The teachings are put in the mouth of Lord Sri Krishna who is regarded as an Avtar or the Divine in human form. This naturally gives these teachings a unique strength and prestige.



The soul is in essence the Divine. But to a human mind, in meditation, it seems to have three aspects (1) The all-pervading Divine. (2) A portion of the Divine that accompanies the individual in his evolution. (3) A Psychic Person that develops by the experiences of a succession of lives, in the evolution of this world, till it reaches the superconscious stage, when the soul is released from further birth. It is the last aspect which is the easiest to grasp. Knowing this, we have first to attain the superconscious stage through Buddhi and then the second aspect is realized and finally we find that we are one with the Divine. When we speak of the 'soul' in this book, we mean it in its last aspect.

The Gita gives us an idea of the Divine, based on human experiences and then presents to us the idea of Divine Unity. We see Him by our senses in the form of multiple beings and objects. When, however, we control the senses and still the mind, we perceive Him as the One, Immutable, pervading everywhere. These are the two mutually conflicting aspects of the Divine perceivable by us. But He is the One and the many at the same time and also transcends these two aspects.

The truth is that our finite and limited minds cannot visualize the Infinite and the Absolute. We perceive Him as the One, Immutable, Inactive, Qualityless, as well as the Many, Mutable, Active and Qualityful. We see ourselves also as the combination of two opposite aspects, the soul and the body or Purusha and Prakriti. The Gita describes the birth of creation as due to the Divine Father casting His own seed into the Mother Prakriti. We inherit the soul from our Father and the body from the Mother. The Soul is the Reality, which creates the phenomena of Prakriti. Buddhi and mind being the elements of Prakriti, we can only see Prakriti in different forms, but we cannot see the Soul by the Buddhi or the mind. The Purusha or soul is inactive and selfconscious, while the Prakriti is active and mechanical. Prakriti comprises Buddhi (intelligence), Ahankara, (individualism),

mind, senses subtle and gross bodies. These derive consciousness when they come in contact with the Soul and are subject to evolution. In the same way, everything in the world has, to a human mind a positive and a negative aspect: i.e. good and bad, pleasure and pain etc. These dualities are inseparable from one another in this world.

Our soul identifies itself with the play of Prakriti. Our thoughts and actions produce impressions on the soul which again become the cause of further actions. This chain of cause and effect is un-ending. When the body dies, the soul has to take up new materials of mind and body from the mental and physical planes to give effect to the impressions formed at the time of last death. In this way the soul becomes entangled in an endless chain of births and deaths.

There is an evolution in this world. Starting from matter and proceeding through the different kinds of life, the last handiwork of evolution is man who besides matter, life and mind also possesses Buddhi (Intelligence). We have the power of reasoning and discrimination. It is on this account that we can distinguish between good and bad, virtue and sin. While animals work on instincts man has some freedom of will. We are born with a certain frame of mind and body and under conditions of environment over which we had no say. But under these limitations we have freedom of action. On the one hand the Divine within, calls us to His Eternal Self-consciousness which is full of its own Delight. On the other hand, all the elements of Prakriti: i.e. Buddhi mind senses etc. divert our attention to the various objects of Prakriti in the external world which are mutable, mechanical, temporary and in which pleasure is always mixed up with pain. This mutual conflict between the real and unreal is always going on in man and we must understand its object and the purpose of our existence.

The object of our being born in this world is to

develop the soul, so that it may attain the Divine Status and be liberated from further births. The world is a training ground as well as a place of test. The Divine has given to everyone of us enough materials for progress in the evolution of this world, so that we may reach the super-conscious stage one day and be in union with Him. These materials are peculiarly our own and different from others. Every one of us has been endowed with special spiritual qualities and powers. Out of His Infinite number of qualities and powers, everyone of us has got some in various degrees, so that no two persons are alike in this respect. Everyone of us has been given a temperament, so that we feel pleasure in doing that work for which we have been specially fitted. A woman feels pleasure in bearing all the hardships of maternity. A man feels happy when doing works requiring strength and endurance. Again if we ponder over the matter, we will find that everyone of us feels happy when working in a profession for which we are specially fitted by nature. This allotment of our distinctive powers and qualities means maximum efficiency for the whole community and this mutual dependence leads to peace and harmony among ourselves. But since the Divine has given us distinctive qualities and powers, He evidently wants us to develop them. We find that the development of an individual's distinctive qualities leads him to perfection and liberation. A household woman performing her duties in the house faithfully attains to spiritual knowledge or liberation to the same extent as a warrior who dies in the battlefield performing his duties faithfully.

The problem however with us is that our special spiritual qualities can only be brought into play through the elements of Prakriti i. e. Buddhi, mind, senses etc. Our special qualities are thus not faithfully represented in our actions. Our actions are distortions of our special spiritual qualities to the extent by which our Buddhi, mind and senses are removed from perfection. We have therefore to make these elements perfect. When the Buddhi reaches this stage of purity or perfection, we

realise that it was not the soul that was acting but the elements of Prakriti. When this happens the soul is released from further births.

How can the Buddha be developed to the stage of purity? Evidently the sign of a perfect or pure Buddha is that it should realise the truth of the unity of existence. This it can do only when it is concentrated internally on the Soul itself or when it gives up attachment to the things of Prakriti which diverts its attention from the reality to the phenomena of the Reality. In other words we have to learn to sacrifice this apparent self or surrender it to the Divine. We come to this world to learn the lesson of sacrifice. Our life as a householder and in our profession teaches us that our success, our peace of mind, our perfection lies in the application of the principles of sacrifice in our lives. We have to realize this fundamental principle of our existence and the more we act upon it the more rapid will be our progress towards perfection.

It is to realise the principle of sacrifice and to apply it in our lives that we have come to this world. Our apparent self, the buddhi, mind, senses etc. are given to us for the maintenance of our separate existences. But these elements of Prakriti serve as instruments in our hands by developing which we can realize the error of the soul in identifying itself with Prakriti. The development of these instruments lies through sacrifice.

The Gita teaches us that we can learn this principle of sacrifice or attain knowledge and liberation by developing our inherent powers of learning, actions, devotion and of mind, i.e. of thought, actions, feelings and mind. These are termed Jnan-Yog (Path of spiritual knowledge), Karam-Yog (Path of actions), Bhagti-Yog (Path of devotion) and Raj-Yog (Path of concentration of the mind).

Jnan-Yog is the realisation of the truths of the

Divine and the truths of our existence. We have to realise that the Soul and Prakriti are two independent and separate principles. It gives us discrimination to realise our identity with the Divine.

Karam Yog tells us the way of doing right actions. The secret of work is unattachment to the fruits of works. We should plan out a work for a particular result, do it with zeal and determination and become so absorbed in it as to forget ourselves. We should not however be thinking of the result. If we continue to work in this way, we acquire evenness of mind and truth will shine on us even unasked.

Bhagti Yog starts with worship of the Divine creator or Ishwara in His Personal aspect and ends in an intensity of love by which the worshipped and the worshipper become one. In the love of the Ideally Perfect, the Yogi leaves behind all the other inferior kinds of loves one by one, till he becomes one with the Ideal.

Raj Yog is the practice of the concentration of mind by means of some prescribed exercises. The Yogi concentrates the mind on the mind itself and thus stills the mind. The Divine is thus directly revealed.

Men are of different types. Some have special powers of discrimination, some are men of action, some are devout by nature and some are endowed with special powers of concentrating the mind. But although everyone of us is endowed with special powers of one type, we are not absolutely devoid of other powers. All these powers are parts of the one whole and long before the goal is reached, these parts intermingle and then coalesce. Knowledge leads to devotion. Some knowledge is necessary for right actions and as we progress as Karam Yogis, we gain more and more of knowledge. A devotee when he reaches a certain stage of his progress, gets knowledge automatically. We cannot practice Raj Yog unless we

have knowledge devotion and have attained to a certain standard of morality by doing right actions We should utilise all these four powers in our spiritual progress and we will soon find that all these powers help one another to speed up our progress till their distinctive features fade away in the unity of the Divine

## CHAPTER I

### THE STORY.

About 2500 years ago, there reigned a king in India, with his capital at Hastinapur, the modern Delhi. He had two sons, but both of them died early, leaving behind, one son each, called Pandu and Dhartrashtra respectively. Pandu was heir to the throne, but he also died early, leaving five sons, named Yudhishtar, Bhisham, Arjun, Nikal and Sahdev, called collectively the Pandus. During the minority of "the Pandus", Dhartrashtra carried on the affairs of the State. Dhartrashtra had many sons, of whom Duryodhan was the eldest. The sons of Dhartashtra were collectively called "the Kurus". Dhartrashtra wished to leave the kingdom to his sons. Duryodhan, who was very mean and jealous, tried to destroy the Pandus by several ingenious devices, but was unsuccessful. On the other hand, the Pandus were brave, well trained in the arts of administration and warfare and very noble at heart.

When Yudhishtar, the eldest of the Pandus, reached the age of majority, Dhartrashtra had to hand over the reins of the kingdom to him. The Pandu brothers, by their skill and courage extended their kingdom to the length and

breadth of India and also annexed Cambodia part of China and Afghanistan Duryodhan who had failed to destroy the Pandus now tried another trick to oust them He invited the Pandus to a game of dice He loaded the dice in such a way that he alone could throw them to his best advantage and played with high stakes The Pandus lost their whole kingdom to Duryodhan in these games and had to accept exile from the kingdom for 13 years When after the expiry of this period they returned home *Duryodhan refused to give them even a place to live in* Attempts were made on either side to arrive at some understanding but Duryodhan would not yield This meant war

The Pandus had many followers But as the Kuru brothers had been in power for so long they had also a large following All the feudal lords of the vast kingdom took part in this struggle from one side or the other As the Pandus and Kurus were so closely related they found *many of their friends and relatives in the opposite camps* Lord Sri Krishna seeing the justice of their cause joined the Pandus and became the charioteer of Arjuna the third brother of the Pandus the greatest warrior of his times and the most cultured and noble of them all

When the two parties arranged their respective armies in the battlefield of Kurukshetra a place about 100 miles north of Delhi Arjuna requested his charioteer Lord Sri Krishna to take the chariot between the two armies to enable him to see the people against whom he had to fight When this was done he saw in the opposite camp his near and dear relatives and friends The idea that he should be



responsible for slaying them, broke his heart and he expressed to Lord Sri Krishna, the futility of gaining the kingdom at the sacrifice of persons without whom, he considered life was not worth living. It seemed to him that it would be a great sin to kill them, for the sake of worldly pleasures.

Let us catch the feelings of Arjuna at that time. He was no coward, but a brave warrior who had previously fought many battles. He was born and bred as Kshatriya and considered it his duty to fight battles. But touched by compassion for his near and dear ones, he refuses to fight. He prefers to live a solitary life in the jungles to the rule over a vast kingdom, because the latter could only be obtained by killing his near and dear ones. The professional pleasure of fight, the prospect of victory and of rule over an extensive kingdom have no attraction for him. On one side is his duty, calling him to fight the battle and on the other is the compassion desisting him from the fight. He found his ideals, traditions and practice slipping away from him. The whole fabric of his social, religious and political ideals, in which he had faith and according to which he had been working the whole of his life, was suddenly torn to pieces. He finds no standard of ideals on which to take his stand. As a consequence his thoughts are in a chaos. This is the worst calamity which can befall a man. He opens his heart to Lord Sri Krishna and beseeches him to give him a Dharma, a standard for action so that he may do what he advises.

At first Lord Sri Krishna reminds Arjuna of the duties of a warrior. He re-iterates the ordinary standards

of morality and the truths of existence with which Arjuna was already familiar. But these fail to satisfy him. The motto "Do thy duty" is simple enough, but it is not satisfying to an intelligent and inquisitive mind, especially under conditions in which Arjuna was placed. Why should we do our duty? What is duty? Why have we come to the world? What is the goal of our existence and how can we attain it? These and many subsidiary questions crop up in our mind and demand an explanation. The Gita explains all these problems of existence in a way so as to appeal to our intellect and to satisfy our doubts. This entails a wide field and covers many subjects which do not at first sight seem to be connected with the problem in hand: i.e. whether Arjuna should fight the Kurus or not. But a little consideration will show that all these points need to be explained before one can be expected to do his duty with full faith and conviction.

Finally Lord Sri Krishna inquires from Arjuna if his doubts had been removed. The questions and answers are as follows —

**(18)72—Has this been heard by thee with a concentrated mind? Has thy delusion, caused by ignorance, been destroyed?**

To this Arjuna replies

**(18)73—Destroyed is my delusion and I have regained my memory through Thy Grace. I am firm, my doubts are gone, I will do Thy word.**

It is clear that the Gita is against coercion. Truths should be preached to convert people so that they may do

right actions of their own free will. They should not be coerced to do any action.

The way in which the Gita came to be recorded was this. Sanjaya, a man possessing supernatural powers had been called by the blind king Dhartrashtra to relate to him what was happening in the battlefield. Sanjaya by his special powers saw and heard whatever took place in the battlefield and related it to Dhartrashtra word by word and this was later recorded.

At the end, Sanjaya says as follows :

(18)74—Thus have I heard this wonderful discourse between Vasudeva (Lord Sri Krishna) and the high soul Partha (Arjuna), causing my hair to stand on end.

(18)75—Through the grace of Vyasa (his teacher), I heard this supreme secret, this yoga, direct from Krishna, the Divine Master of Yoga, Who Himself declared it.

(18)76—O King ! (Dhartrashtra) when I remember and remember this wonderful and sacred discourse of Keshava (Lord Sri Krishna) and Arjuna, I rejoice again and again.

(18)77—And as I remember and remember that most wonderful form of Hari (Lord Sri Krishna), great is my wonder, O King ! and I rejoice again and again.

(18)78—Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha (Arjuna), the wielder of the bow, assured are there glory, victory and prosperity and sound policy (Law of Right) ; such is my conviction.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SCENE OF BATTLE AND THE PRELIMINARY ADVICE

(1)1 -Dhartrashtra said Tell me, O Sanjaya ! what did my people and Pandus do, gathered together, eager to fight on the field of Kurkshetra, the field of the working out of Dharma

The word Dharmrashtra is translated as field for working out of the Dharma or religion Conflicts are inevitable for the progress of humanity There come periods in the life of a community when forces of progress and of reaction are so balanced that physical conflict becomes necessary to destroy the forces of reaction and to carry the community on to a further stage of progress When all the people reach the Satvic stage there will prevail peace and harmony and no body would think of physical conflicts But in the present stage of mans evolution such conflicts are necessary for human progress

(1)2—Sanjaya said Then the prince Duryodhan (son of Dhartrashtra) having seen the army of the Pandus arranged in battle order, approached his

teacher Druna and spoke these words.

(1)3—Behold ! O teacher, this mighty army of the sons of Pandu, arranged by Drupad's son (Dharasht Daman) thy intelligent disciple.

Dharasht Daman, the commander of Pandu's army was the son of King Drupad and brother-in-law of the Pandus. He was sometimes back a disciple of Druna, but later there was some misunderstanding between King Drupad and teacher Drona, by which they had become estranged from one another. The purpose of Duryodhan, in approaching Druna, the commander of Kuru's army, was to remind him of the estrangement, so that he may not favour his old pupil Dharasht Daman. The word "intelligent" is spoken ironically.

(1)4-6—Here in this mighty army are heroes, and great bowmen, equal in battle to Arjuna and Bhima ; the great warriors Yuyudhana, Virata and Drupada ; the valiant Dhrishta-Ketu, Chekitana and the king of Kashi, Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaibya, foremost among men ; Yudhamanyu, the strong and Uttamauja, the brave, the son of Subhadra, and the sons of Dropadi, Lords of great chariots.

(1)7—On our side also know those who are the most distinguished, O Best of the twice-born, the leaders of my army ; these I relate to you for your information.

Best of the twice-born means Brahmin, considered the most superior of the three ancient social classes, the

Brahman (the priestly or teacher class), the Kshatriya (the warrior or administrative class), the Veshava (the businessman) All these classes were termed the twice-born The Sudra the servant or labour class formed the fourth class of society Duryodhan reminds his teacher that he is a Brahman and being of priestly class should not lose heart He therefore names the great warriors on his side

(1)8-9—Yourself and Bhishhma and Karna and Kripa, the victorious in battle, Ashvatthama, Vikarna and Saumadatti also; and many other heroes have renounced their life for my sake; they are all armed with diverse weapons and missiles and determined to lay down their lives for my sake.

(1)10—Unlimited is this our army defended by Bhishma, while the army of theirs is easy to count and they depend on Bhima.

Bhishma and Bhima are the commanders of the forward armies of the Kurus and Pandus respectively

(1)11—Therefore all ye standing in your proper places in the divisions of the army, support Bhishma alone.

(1)12—Cheering the heart of Duryodhana, Bhishma, the powerful, the oldest of the Kurus, now blew his conch, resounding the battlefield with a lion's roar.

(1)13—Then following Bhishma, conches and kettle-drums, tabors and trumpets and cowhorns blasted forth suddenly from the Kurus side and the noise was

tremendous.

(1)14—Then seated in their magnificent chariot, yoked to white horses, Sri Krishna and Arjuna blew their divine conches with a furious noise.

(1)15-16—Sri Krishna blew his Panchajanya and Arjuna his Devadatta (God given); Vrikodra of terrific deeds blew his mighty conch, Paundra; the King Yudhishtra, the son of Kunti, blew Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahdeva (blew conches named) Sughosha and Manipushpka (respectively).

(1)17-18—The expert bowman, King of Kashi and the great warrior Shikandi; Dhrishtadyamna and Virata and Satyaki, the unconquered Drupada and the sons of Dropadi, O Lord of earth (Dhritrashtra)! and Saubhadra, the mighty and on all sides blew their conches.

(1)19—The terrific noise resounding through heaven and earth rent the heart of Dharitrashta

(1)20—Then seeing Dhritrashtra's party standing in battle order and the shooting about to begin, the son of Pandu (Arjuna) whose emblem is a monkey, took up his bow and said the following words to Krishna; O Lord of Earth (Dhritrashtra)!

We should remember that it is Sanjaya relating the scene to his king Dhritrashtra. Sanjaya by his spiritual power could see what was happening in the battlefield, while sitting with Dhritrashtra in his palace far away from the battle-field

(1)21-23—Arjuna said : O Krishna ! place my chariot between the two armies, so that I may view, those who stand here beginning battle, whom I have to meet this day of fight, and look upon those who come here to fight the evil cause of the evil-minded sons of Dhristarashtra.

(1)24-25—Sanjaya said : Thus addressed by Arjuna, Sri Krishna having placed the grandest of chariots between the two armies, facing Bhishma, Drona and all the princes of the earth, said, "Behold, all the Kurus gathered together."

(1)26—Then saw Arjuna stationed there in both the armies, grandfathers, fathers-in-law, uncles, brothers, cousins, and their sons and grandsons, and comrades, teachers and other friends.

(1)27—Seeing all these kinsmen standing in their ranks, Arjuna uttered this in sorrow, filled with deep compassion

(1)28-29—Arjuna said : Seeing these my own people, O Krishna ! gathered here for battle, my limbs fail me, and my mouth is parched. My body shakes and my hairs stand on end. The bow Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin seems to burn.

Arjuna was over-powered with emotion and lost his self control,

(1)30—I am not able to stand and my mind seems to whirl ; also I see evil omens.



(1)31—Nor do I see any good in killing these my own people in battle. I desire not victory nor kingdom, nor pleasure.

(1)32-35—Of what avail is kingdom to us, of what avail are pleasures and even life? Those for whose sake we desire kingdom, pleasure, enjoyments, they themselves stand here in battle, having renounced life and wealth—teachers, uncles, sons and also grand-fathers, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, besides other kinsmen; these I would not consent to kill, even though they were to kill me, not even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, how much less for the sake of the earth. What pleasures can be ours after killing the sons of Dhrit-rashtra.

(1)36—Sin will take hold of us in slaying them though they are the felons. Therefore it is not fit that we kill our kinsmen, the sons of Dhritrashtra; indeed how can we be happy by killing our own people.

(1)37-38—Although they, with a consciousness clouded with greed, see no guilt in the destruction of the families, no sin in hostility to friends; why should not we have the wisdom to draw back from such a sin; we who see clearly, see the evil in the destruction of the family.

(1)39—On the destruction of the family, the immemorial morality of the family is destroyed; on the destruction of the morality, immorality overcomes

the whole family

(1)40—Owing to predominance of immorality, the women of the family become corrupt, and women being corrupt, confusion of Varna (caste) arises

(1)41—This confusion leads to hell, the family and the ruiners of the family, for their ancestors fall deprived of the offerings of pinda (rice balls) and libations

This refers to Sraddha ceremony of the Hindus. During a fortnight every year Sraddha is celebrated for every ancestor on the particular day of the moon he died. On that day Brahmins and the poor are fed in memory of the ancestor.

(1)42 By these misdeeds of the ruiners of the family, bringing about confusion of caste, the immemorial religious practices of the caste and of the family are destroyed

(1)43—And we have heard that men in whose family religious practices have been destroyed dwell in hell

(1)44—Alas! we are engaged in a great sin by endeavouring to kill our own people through greed of the pleasures of a kingdom

(1)45 Indeed if the sons of Dhritrashtra, with weapons in hand were to slay me, unarmed and unresisting, that would be better for me

(1)46—Sanjaya said: Having thus spoken on the battlefield, casting away his bow and arms, Arjuna sank down on the seat of his chariot, with his mind overwhelmed with sorrow.

## CHAPTER II

(2)1—Sanjaya said: To him who thus overwhelmed with pity and distress, whose eyes were dimmed with tears, Sri Krishna spoke these words.

(2)2—Whence has come to thee this dejection, un-Arya like, disgraceful, in this crisis and contrary to the attainment of heaven.

(2)3—Yield not to unmanliness. Ill does it become thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise.

(2)4—Arjuna said: How can I in battle strike Bhishma and Drona with arms, who are worthy of worship?

(2)5—Better in this world to live even on alms than to slay these high-souled gurus. If I slay these gurus, I shall taste of blood-stained enjoyments even in this world.

(2)6—And indeed I can scarcely tell which would be better, that we conquer them or that they conquer us. The very sons of Dhartrashtra stand facing us, after slaying whom, we should not care to live.

(2)7—With my (true Kshatriya) nature overpowered by weak compassion, with my whole consciousness in confusion about dharma (duty), I supplicate Thee to

tell me decisively what is good for me. I am Thy disciple. Instruct me, who have taken refuge in Thee.

Arjuna finds the duty or dharma of the warrior, the ideal which he had been following the whole of his life, failing him at this critical moment of his life. The compassion that he feels for his teachers, relatives and companions-in-arm in the enemy's camp, suddenly makes him lose faith in those ideals. No substitute for those ideals, suggests itself to him. He is now full of doubts and supplicates his friend to point out the right path. Svabhava (one's nature) is as explained in the chapter on Svabhava one's svadharma (duty). When one's svadharma is overpowered by considerations of senses or feelings and emotions, he cannot do the right thing.

(2)8—I do not see any thing to remove this sorrow which blasts my senses even if I were to obtain unrivalled and flourishing kingdom on earth or even the sovereignty over the gods.

(2)9—Sanjaya said: Having thus spoken to Sri Krishna, he said "I will not fight".

(2)10—To him who was thus sorrowing, Sri Krishna smiling, as it were, spoke these words, standing between the two armies.

(2)11—The Blessed Lord said: Thou grieveest for those who should not be grieved, yet speakest words of wisdom. The truly wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead.

Sri Krishna first teaches Arjuna, on the basis of the ideas of morality and culture with which ordinary people of that age were familiar. Higher philosophic and religious truths were taken later on.

(2)12—It is not true that I have never existed before, nor thou, nor these kings. Nor is it that we shall cease to exist in the future.

(2)13—As are childhood, youth and old age in this body to the embodied soul, so also is the attaining of another body. The self-composed man is not deluded by it.

(2)14—The material touches, giving heat and cold, pain and pleasure, are transient which come and go ; learn to bear them patiently.

(2)15—The calm person who is the same in pain and pleasure, whom these cannot disturb, alone is able to attain to immortality.

This equality of mind means consciousness with the Eternal and Immutable Divine. Such a man becomes immortal and is not subject to birth and death.

(2)16—That which really is, cannot go out of existence, just as that which is non-existent, cannot come into existence. Men possessed of the knowledge of the Truth fully know both these.

(2)17—Know that (soul) to be imperishable by which all this is extended. Who can slay the immortal soul ?

(2)18—Finite bodies have an end but that which

possesses and uses the body is infinite, illimitable, eternal, indestructible ; therefore fight.

(2)19—He who regards this (the soul) as a slayer, and he who thinks it is slain, both of them know not. It does not slay, nor it is slain.

(2)20— This is not born, nor does it die, nor is it that having been, it again ceases to be. This is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever itself It is not slain when the body is slain.

(2)21—Who knows it as immortal, eternal, imperishable, unborn, how can that man slay or cause it to be slain?

(2)22—The embodied soul casts old bodies, and takes up new bodies, even as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new.

(2)23—Weapons cannot cut it, nor the fire burn, nor do the waters drench it, nor the wind dry.

(2)24—It cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor dried. Changeless, unmoving, immovable, the self is eternal.

(2)25—It is said to be unmanifest, unthinkable, and unchangeable, therefore knowing it to be such, thou shouldst not grieve.

(2)26—Even if thou thinkest of it as being constantly subject to birth and death, still thou shouldst not grieve.

If for the sake of argument, we take the soul to be

subject to birth and death, we should not grieve because birth and death are inevitable.

(2)27—Of that which is born, death is certain, of that which is dead, birth is certain. What is inevitable, should not be a cause of sorrow.

(2)28—All beings are unmanifest in the beginning, manifest in their middle, unmanifest again in their end. What is their to be grieved at ?

(2)29—Some look upon the soul as wonderful, others speak of it as wonderful. Others again hear of it, as a wonder. Still others though hearing, do not understand it at all.

(2)30—The Dweller (soul) in the bodies of all is eternal and indestructible ; therefore thou shouldst not grieve for any creature.

(2)31—Further, looking at thine own Dharma, thou oughtest not to waver, for there is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous battle.

Svabhava is one's svadharma See the chapter on this subject.

(2)32—Fortunate certainly are the Kshatriyas who are called to fight such a battle that comes unsought as an open gate to heaven.

One who dies doing his duty goes to heaven, according to Shastras. Also see the chapter on Svabhava.

(2)33—But if thou refusest to engage in this righte

ous battle, then abandoning thy Dharma and Virtue, thou shalt incur sin.

(2)34—Besides men will ever hold thee in disgrace ; to the honoured, disrepute is surely worse than death.

(2)35—The great men will think of thee fled from the battle through fear and those who highly esteem thee, will think lightly of thee.

(2)36—Many unseemly words will be spoken by thy enemies cavilling at thy strength. What could be more painful than this ?

(2)37—Dying thou shalt gain heaven ; victorious, thou shalt enjoy the earth ; therefore arise, resolved to fight.

(2)38—Having made pain and pleasure, gain and loss, conquest and defeat the same, turn to battle. In this way thou shalt incur no sin.

Here is the teaching of Karm Yoga which is explained later under that chapter



philosophy on the experiences of several saints and its philosophy has been expounded by Lord Sri Krishna himself an Avtar or the Divine in human form

The philosophy of the Gita is so framed as to be convincing and to command implicit faith. It is helpful for peace and success in this life and also at all stages of our spiritual progress. The idea of Purusha (soul) and Prakriti (energy and matter) being two separate principles is helpful in the initial stages of our progress. Later we find that both are but comings of Divine Power. When however we attain union with the immutable and impersonal aspect of the Divine we find that there is a still higher status called the Purushottama. Who is at once the Immutable and the Mutable, One and the Many, the Impersonal and the Personal. We attain union with this Transcendent Person by intense love and devotion.

The above truths will be explained along with others in this book. Suffice here to say that the philosophy of the Gita is not only intellectual but based on spiritual experiences presented in such a form as to be understandable by human mind and helpful at all stages of our spiritual progress. To the Gita this world is real and not an illusion. The Gita does not try to evade the question of ignorance and evil by ascribing them to a devil. It goes to the very root of the question and explains it in a very convincing manner as to what is meant by ignorance and evil. It explains the truths of the Divine of living beings of the cosmos of the principles of our existence human nature faith and sacrifice.

morality etc. in a very convincing manner. It gives us details of the methods of developing our inherent powers in order to attain peace and happiness in this world and also spiritual knowledge which leads to Immortality.

Before, however, we take up Gita's philosophy in detail, we shall explain the philosophy of the Sankhyas. This philosophy seems very natural to an average man and is easy to follow. The Gita makes use of its details to develop its own philosophy and its principles are referred to frequently in the Gita. It is therefore necessary to acquaint ourselves with it, before we take up Gita's philosophy.

**Sankhya Philosophy**—It lays down that there are two fundamental and independent elements in the universe, the Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (energy and matter). There are as many Purushas in this world as the number of living beings, but Prakriti is one. It does not believe in the unity of the Purushas or in the Divine. Both the Purushas and the Prakriti are eternal. The Purusha is Self-conscious, Immutable, Inactive, Qualityless (Nirguna), while Prakriti is mechanical, mutable, active and qualityful.

The first postulate of this philosophy is the Satkarya-vada theory. According to this theory the qualities produced in the "effect" must have been present in the "cause". Applying this theory to the creation of the world, all the qualities that we see in the different substances or in living beings, must have been present in the original or fundamental substance.

As the Purusha is Immutable and Qualityless all such qualities must have been present in the original Prakriti. Let us see how the Sankhya philosophy solves the riddle of producing infinite number of qualities we see in the different substances and living beings in the world from the one Prakriti.

According to this philosophy Prakriti possesses three qualities or gunas Satva Rajas and Tamas. Tamas is the guna of indolence and inertia Rajas of activity or passions Satva of harmony beauty and order. These three gunas suggest themselves to us both in our lives and in the evolution of this world. In infancy one is full of indolence or inertia in youth one is full of activity and on maturity one is harmonious. Similarly we see that the evolution of this world started from inert matter then proceeded through activity of life and mind and we can imagine that there is a harmonious stage ahead of us which we may term as the superconscious stage. All these three gunas are always present in all substances in varying proportions. It is the variation of the proportion of these three gunas which is responsible for the variety of existences. If satvic guna predominates the existence has reached a stage of harmony and perfection; if Rajas predominates it is the middle stage of activity; if Tamas predominates it shows the initial stage of inertia and indolence.

At the beginning of the world Prakriti was in subtle form and imperceptible. All the three gunas of Prakriti were then in harmony and at rest. The different per-

ceptible forms of the world, came into being by the dis-equilibrium of the three gunas of Prakriti. As soon as this occurred, it became perceptible and gave form to a variety of perceptible things. But what gave rise to this dis-equilibrium of the gunas? The Sankhya philosophers say that it was the element of Buddhi (discriminatory reason and will) which produced the desire in Prakriti to show itself in the form of various perceptible things. The element of Buddhi is present in Prakriti, but as Prakriti is mechanical, it does not understand its own Buddhi. It is only when Prakriti joins with Purusha, forming a living being, that Prakriti derives consciousness from it and the Purusha comes to know of the presence of Buddhi in Prakriti. In reality, however, Buddhi is an element of the mechanical Prakriti. Even the modern scientists believe that there is something akin to intelligence in matter, for otherwise we cannot explain the various movements of electrons in an atom, or the facts of cohesion, gravitation and the like.

Buddhi however is subtle and its presence in Prakriti does not produce dis-equilibrium in the gunas or produce distinct perceptible forms. As soon as the desire arose in Buddhi to break the homogeneity of Prakriti or to come within the limitations of Time and Space, Prakriti broke up into several perceptible forms. This breaking up of Prakriti into finite forms, by the desire of Buddhi is called Ahankara or individuation. When the Ahankara came into being, diverse things were produced, diversity being due to the varying proportions of the three gunas. Those possessing a greater proportion of Satvic guna are

subtler than those possessing the other two gunas in greater proportion. The variety of substances so produced may be divided into two classes. The one belonging wholly to living beings comprises the mind the 5 senses of perception and the 5 elements of action. The other class belonging to the inorganic world consists of the 5 tan-matras which go to make the 5 primordial elements called ether air fire water and earth.

The 5 senses of perception are hearing touch sight taste and smell. The five elements of action are those which provide the movements exercised by hands feet voice anus and generative organs respectively. All these are subtle though perceptible to the mind. The senses of perception do not function unless the mind be attached to them. When perceptions take place the mind classifies them compares them with similar perceptions stored in the memory a faculty of the mind and obtains the sanction of Buddhi which acts as a judge. The decision arrived at by Buddhi is communicated to the mind which gets the elements of action to act accordingly. The mind has thus the dual function of a leader and of an executive. Mind comprises planning memory, faith worship and all the feelings and emotions such as love fear anger jealousy sexual impulse courage etc. All the internal elements of man's body comprising Buddhi Ahankara and elements of perception and action together with mind are included in the word antakaran and form the subtle body (suksham sarira) which accompanies the soul after death.

All the gross bodies are made of the 5 subtle

tanmatras. The five tanmatras are the elements which produce the five senses of perception. That is, one tanmatra produces the sense of hearing, the second of touch, the third of sight, the fourth of taste and the fifth of smell. It is by the combination of the tanmatras that the primordial elements ether, air, fire, water and earth are produced.

The classification of matter is made according to their reactions on our senses and the order in which they appeared in the evolution of this world. We obtain knowledge of the outside world through our senses of perception i.e. hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell. The first to appear in the world was ether which affects us as sound. We know that electromagnetic waves travel through ether and that these waves are made use of for hearing through the radio i.e. ether has an element of sound. Next to appear in the evolution was air, which affects us not only as sound but also as touch. Then came fire, which affects us as sound, touch and light. The fourth was water, affecting us as sound, touch, light and taste. The last to appear was earth, which affects all the five senses of perception.

The Sankhya philosophers thus hold that the order in which the elements of Prakriti appeared in the world was Buddhi, Ahankara, Mind, 5 senses of Perception and 5 of Action, 5 Tanmatras and 5 Primordial elements. These are 23 in all and including the original Prakriti, these number twenty-four.

A living being is formed by the union of Puruṣha (individual soul) with Prakriti. It is union with Puruṣha

that gives consciousness to the elements of Prakriti. As already indicated all the elements of Prakriti with all their evolutes or modifications have in them all the three gunas in more or less proportions. The preponderance of Satva implies perfection or harmony of Rajas activity of Tamas inaction and indolence. In the innumerable stages of evolution starting from matter and passing through different kinds of life and mind the Purusha reaches the stage of man. Although Purusha is Eternal Self Conscious Self Delight of being and Inactive it identifies itself with the ego of Prakriti considers itself as the Doer and takes pleasure and pain in things of Prakriti. This attachment of the immutable Purusha with the mutable Prakriti make the Purusha to accompany the Prakriti in the stages of infancy youth and maturity in this life and also to accompany the subtle body after death. It selects materials for the new body on the basis of experiences gained and the prevailing ideas at the time of last death.

In this way the soul remains in bondage to Prakriti and in the cycles of birth and death. When however the Buddhi develops and reaches the Satvic stage it realizes that elements of Prakriti alone were working and not the Purusha. It recoils from this ignorance and the Purusha is released from further birth. It is only the Purusha whose Buddhi is developed enough to realise this ignorance that is released from the bondage of birth and death. Others continue to be bound to the Prakriti and to the cycles of birth and death.

Sankhya philosophers were led to believe in the

plurality of Purushas, because we find that every Purusha has its own experiences in life, has its own faith and ideals and looks on the world from its own point of view. If all the Purushas were one, this would not have been the case. Again we have seen that a Purusha is released when the Buddhi reaches a certain stage of development. If all the Purushas had been one, all the Purushas would have been released when the first Purusha was released and the world would then have come to an end. This however did not happen. Therefore the Sankhya philosophers believe in the multiplicity of Purushas.

This philosophy is easy to follow and although it does not provide an explanation to several truths of existence, it forms a useful basis for the understanding of higher truths. Also the principle of the separation of Purusha and Prakriti is of great advantage in the initial stages of our progress. It is on this account that the Gita makes use of its details in its own philosophy.

**The Philosophy of the Gita.** The Gita accepts the whole of Sankhya philosophy excepting its fundamentals. There is however also a minor difference in the classification of Prakriti. The Gita divides Prakriti into 8 elements only i. e. Buddhi, Ahankara, Mind and the 5 tanmatras. It regards the other 15 i. e. the five elements of perception, five of action and five primordial gross elements as evolutes of these eight.

As regards the fundamentals, the Gita holds that there is only One Supreme Purusha (Purushotama). He is Eternal, Self-Conscious, and a being of Self-Delight,



Omnipotent and Omnipresent He is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all things But He appears to us in two aspects When after having obtained perfect control over mind and senses we contemplate on the mind itself we see the soul in all its light and glory All the perceptible objects then fade away from our view We find that there is the One Eternal Self-Conscious Immutable Being pervading everywhere He is the Inactive and seems to do nothing On the other hand with our mind and senses we perceive Him in the form of different varieties of animals plants material objects and forces There is no limit to His division We can break a particle of matter up to a certain limit and there is a limit upto which we can imagine the minutest possible division The infinitesimal is beyond our imagination Similarly the extent of space in which He prevades is beyond the limit of our imagination and we call it the infinite There are infinite varieties of animals plants insects and objects and infinite number of each species Even the individuals of one species differ from one another in details of body qualities of mind and senses Thus if we ponder over this matter we shall find that there is no limit to variety or the division of anything in the world

For our human mind which is of very limited understanding and only fit to perceive finite things within a very narrow range it is not possible to imagine the Infinite or have knowledge of the Divine It is difficult for us to imagine that He the One can be in infinite number of places, with infinite varieties of forms and qualities He is in atom or the leaf of a tree in elephant or man not

divided but with the same infinite consciousness in each and all.

The Gita calls the immutable aspect of the Divine, the Akshara and the mutable aspect, the Kshara. But the Divine—the Purushotama, the One, transcends both these aspects. He is the Akshara, as well as the Kshara at the same time and transcends them both

The Gita holds that the Jivatma or individual soul is a becoming of His Supreme Power, called Para-Prakriti. This means that the individual soul is the Divine Himself, but in its aspect of individual soul. The Prakriti of the Sankhyas is the same as the Aparā-Prakriti and it comprises Buddhi, Ahankara, Mind, Senses, Tanmatras and their evolutes and modifications, such as knowledge, worship, faith and all feelings and emotions. All these have the three gunas Satva, Rajas and Tamas present in them, in more or less proportions

It is by the union of Para Prakriti (individual soul) and Aparā Prakriti (matter or energy) that a living being is formed. Although the soul is Divine in essence, it identifies itself with the ego of Prakriti, takes pleasure in the drama played by Prakriti and considers itself as the Doer. This attachment with the mutable Prakriti makes it to accompany the subtle body after death. After some time, the sheaths of subtle body also drop away. The soul then takes new materials of body from the material and mental planes according to the experiences gained by it and its prevailing ideas at the time of last death. It is in this way that the soul remains in bondage of Prakriti

and in the cycles of birth and death. It is only when the Buddhi and other elements reach the Satvic stage that the soul realizing its error is liberated from birth and death.

The body may be compared to a field and the soul to the Lord of the field. Just as the Lord of the field, by proper weeding manuring watering and by using proper seeds can have good crop similarly we have to exercise control over our minds and senses, do proper actions and develop *our inherent powers on proper lines in order to* expect good results. Since the same Divine is present everywhere and the same Prakriti forms the body of every one it follows that every one of us is a microcosm in the macrocosm of the world.

The two essential principles of existence are the svabhava and sacrifice. By svabhava is meant the *essential spiritual qualities and powers of an individual*. As the One Divine manifests Himself under the limitations of time and space in the form of a number of living beings and inanimate objects it follows that there must be harmony between all the various existences. In order to possess this harmony, the Divine has given to each individual soul some spiritual qualities and powers which the others lack. Thus everyone of us contributes towards the needs of others and receives in turn services of others for his own needs. This mutual dependence leads to harmony order and the maximum efficiency in this world.

But in this world, we do not find the harmony which

one would thus expect. The reason is that the spiritual Svabhava has to be translated into action through the elements of Prakriti, Buddhi, Mind, Senses, and Body. Unless these elements be developed to the Satvic stage, we cannot expect Svabhava to be faithfully represented in thoughts and actions. Our effort should therefore be to develop the Satvic qualities.

Another basic principle in this life is that of Sacrifice. We have to give something before we can expect to receive what we need. This law of exchange goes on not only among the members of this world, but also between this material world and the spiritual world. Unless we work for them, we cannot obtain the gifts of food or rain. This law is of general application. Man however wants to obtain wealth and offspring and followers without giving anything in return. The Prakriti, a power of the Divine however does not yield to an individual's desire, but works according to the law or will of the Divine. Such men have to suffer for breaking natural laws. If however we know the implications of this law and consciously surrender our apparent Self at the altar of the Divine, we can attain the Divine Status in this life.

The Gita does not regard the world as unreal or illusory. It holds that the One Divine manifests Himself in all the infinite forms of Mind, Life and Body or Matter and their combinations. It is He who in the evolution gradually reveals Himself more and more, starting from matter, into life and then again through mind into His

super-consciousness In the evolution He works with as much of His apparent consciousness as is necessary for that stage of evolution keeping the rest of His infinite consciousness latent In matter we see no life or activity and no mind But He is there latent in every atom or in any infinitesimal part of it with His whole Infinite consciousness He is the one and cannot be divided In different stages of life He reveals more and more of his consciousness Man is at the top of the evolutionary process We have however to go a long way before we can reach the super-consciousness of the Divine In the different stages of evolution He seems to work with the required consciousness and seems to forget His Infinite Consciousness just as a scholar forgets his personality when he concentrates his mind on a particular subject This limitation of His infinite consciousness in the different stages of evolution is the cause of ignorance As this limitation is gradually released or as evolution proceeds ignorance becomes less and less till when the superconscious stage is reached the whole of His consciousness is recovered

The question now arises that when the Divine Himself manifests Himself in the different stages of evolution everything must be pre-ordained or done according to the Divine Will If that be so what is the use of moral or religious teaching Man should give up all effort and let the Divine work out His Way To think so is the result of our ignorance We try to think from the point of view of the Divine which we are not capable of doing with our finite and limited minds From the human

point of view, it is possible to improve ourselves and attain the Divine Status even in this life. For this purpose we must know the truths of the Reality and of our existence, and the methods by which we can develop our inherent powers in order to attain the Divine Status. This is what the Gita teaches.

The methods by which we can attain our goal are fourfold i.e. Karm Yog (the path of works), Jnan Yog (the path of knowledge), Bhagti Yog (the path of love) and Raj Yog (the path of contemplation). The Gita advocates the development of our inherent powers on right lines and this results in knowledge and liberation.

Love plays a very important part in our lives. The ideal love is the absolute identity of the lover and the beloved. Its lower forms are faith, sympathy, compassion, friendship, love of man and wife and parental love. If we ponder over the matter, we will find that our birth, growth, education and activities are based on love. Without it our lives would be dull and dreary and not worth living.

Work or activity of the mind and body is again a principal factor in our lives. Our very existence, the development of our mind and body, our livelihood, the existence and progress of a community or nation depends on work of the mind and body. Our learning, science, industries, our corporate life is based on work. It is on the basis of our experience and ideals at the time of death that the soul determines the nature and circumstances of our next birth. Thus works are responsible for the

nature of our birth in the cycles of birth and death

Knowledge is also an inherent power and plays prominent part in the development of an individual or the community and of the nation. We begin to learn and speak by following the example of parents and others in the family. We receive education and training in schools and colleges for the development of our mental faculties and for our livelihood. We learn several things from study, from the experience gained in our professions and from those we come in contact with. The learning may be of arts, sciences, philosophy or religion. All these develop our minds and lead to the knowledge of Reality.

There is the fourth power of mind called concentration. The mind has immense powers but we allow them to be diffused or frittered away. Just as the Sun's rays when concentrated can produce immense heat, similarly concentrated powers of the mind produce wonders. Mind has also the power to contemplate on itself and when this is done the Soul appears which gives us the Self-knowledge.

All these four powers are inherent in every human being. We have however no knowledge of their intrinsic truth or law and use them in a haphazard manner. Thus these powers are frittered away and more often than not retard our progress.

Our powers are like the forces of a torrent. If we let the torrent run its course, it erodes the hillsides, does

considerable damage to cultivable lands, crops, habitations, to life both of men and animals and its waters run to waste. But if we study the principles of its flow and how to control it and make best use of the water of the torrent, we can by planting trees on the hillsides, by constructing weirs and reservoirs, avoid this damage and utilise the water for producing electricity and for irrigating lands

Similarly if we know the principles or Truths of the Divine, of our existence and of these four inherent powers, we can avoid pain and misery resulting from ignorance and develop our powers on right lines which will lead not only to peace and prosperity in this life, but also to release from the cycles of birth and death, and to the Immortal Self-Conscious Status of the Divine. The Gita teaches us all the truths of the Divine, of our existence, of all that we perceive around us. It tells us in a very comprehensive manner the principles of our inherent powers and how to develop them on right lines. If we read the book carefully we will have faith in these truths and start developing our powers on the lines indicated in the Gita. We are our own friends and can be our own enemies.

## ETHICS OF THE GITA

The Gita provides rules of conduct according to the mental development or spiritual progress of the individual. It does not prescribe definite moral commandments applicable for all mankind. It does not lay down materialistic theories like, 1. Doing good to others without risking our happiness, 2. Greatest good of the greatest



number 3 Survival of the fittest 4 Utilitarianism A little consideration will show that all these theories are defective and not of general application The first is selfish and considering the community as a whole, it is unworkable As to the second it is difficult to decide in what lies the good of the greatest number Generally the opinion of the people on this point is wrong and many have been the cases when the real good of the majority was voiced by our Saints or Prophets who suffered for their opinions It is impossible to decide who are the fit persons or what people are of utility to other people In the case of man it is not the physical body alone that counts The moral mental and spiritual qualities count most and it is not possible to decide who is more accomplished in this respect than others

The Gita lays down that ordinary people should observe the rule of the Shastras The Shastras comprise spiritual and wordly experiences of the human race These give fundamental truths of the Reality, the principles of existence the rules of conduct best suited for the society, and social or political order conducive to peace and harmony between members of a community, nation or mankind Note the following verses of the Gita

(16)23—He who casts aside the rules of the Shastras and acts as his desires prompt him does not attain either perfection or happiness or the highest goal.

(16)24—Therefore let the Shastras be thy authority for determining what should be done and what should

not be done. Knowing what is declared by the rules of the Shastras, thou should'st do thy work in the world.

These rules however, are useful under certain conditions of environment and in a certain age. These rules are modified off and on to suit conditions which change with time and by contact with other peoples. Thus the Shastras are not fixed and permanent, but are revised by the general will of the people.

There are bound to be some people in society far more in advance than others, ethically, mentally and spiritually who think and act in a different manner than what is generally approved by custom. How are the actions of such people to be judged? The Gita answers the question in the following talk between Arjuna and Lord Krishna.

(17)1—Arjuna said ; When men neglecting the ordinances of the Shastras, filled with faith offer sacrifices, what is their position ? Is it Satva, Rajas or Tamas ?

(17)11—The Blessed Lord said : That sacrifice which is offered by men without desire for personal fruit, according to right principles with mind fixed on the sacrifice only, is Satvic.

(17)12—That which is performed in expectation of reward or for the sake of ostentation, know it to be Rajas.

**(17)13—**The sacrifice which is not according to right principles in which no food is distributed, without the hymns, without gifts, which is empty of faith, is said to be Tamas.

The word sacrifice is used in a general sense and is applicable to any work performed by an individual

Ordinary men are to carry out their own duties. The *saint or the liberated man should not preach* to them higher spiritual truths for they have not attained the stage of development to grasp the significance of these truths. They misunderstand them and leave off even the performance of their own duties. Refer to the following verses of the Gita

**(3)26—**He (the liberated man) should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant, attached to actions; he should set them to all actions, doing them himself with knowledge and in Yoga (with the Divine).

The liberated man works with full knowledge and is in union with the Divine. The ignorant do their duties but without knowledge. If they continue their duties faithfully, they will in course of time attain to knowledge. But the effect of preaching high truths to them may be wrongly interpreted and they are likely to leave off their duties. It is enough that such men should do their duties and the liberated man should only set them to their works

**(3)29—**Those who are bewildered by the Gunas of Prakriti (and cannot perceive the Reality) not knowers

of the whole, let not the knowers of the whole (the liberated men) disturb them in their mental standpoint.

**(18)67—**This (teaching) is never to be spoken by them to one who is devoid of austerities or devotion, nor to one who does not serve others; nor to him who cavils at Me (the Purushotama).

Higher truths are to be preached only to those who perform austerities, are devoted to the Divine, and have the spirit of service

Those however who are devoted to the Divine, work impersonally and without desire and have acquired equality of mind for all, that is who have all the characteristics of men of perfect devotion, should follow the Immortal Dharma See the verse below

**(12)20—**But exceedingly dear to Me are the devotees who make Me their supreme goal and follow with perfect faith and devotion the Immortal Dharma.

In the language of the Gita, Dharma is work done according to the Svabhava, special spiritual powers and qualities of the individual (See Chap. X on Svabhav). But as this Svabhava has to be translated through the Buddhi, mind and senses of the individual, the Svabhav is distorted according to the preponderance in the individual of the Rajas and Tamas gunas. It is only when the Satvic stage is reached that the Svabhav is faithfully reproduced in action. Thus there are many dharmas or rules of action before this stage is reached, for the various types

of mental and vital nature

The Immortal Dharma is the Divine consciousness beyond the three gunas beyond the union with the Immutable aspect of the Divine when the Consciousness becomes one with that of the transcendent Purushotama

But beyond all this and the culmination of all is to surrender everything to the Purushotama Then we let the Divine do our acts and do whatever He likes with our soul mind and body There is then no Dharma for us no sin and no virtue This is the culmination of all Dharmas See below

**(18)66—Abandon all Dharmas and take refuge in Me alone I will deliver thee from all sin and evil, do not grieve**

Thus the Gita preaches a rising scale of dharmas varying according to the stage of development of an individual The first is the Dharma of the Shastras or the social code of a community which should be followed by the individuals of that community But men of more advanced ideas are to be permitted to follow the dictates of their conscience provided these lead towards the Satvic stage Ordinary people however should continue to perform their duties according to their own lights within the limitations of the social code The advanced men should not preach higher truths to them as they will not understand the significance of these truths and so will leave off even their own duties More advanced people are to follow the immortal Dharma of the Divine i.e. the truth of

unity, beauty and order. But the final stage is of "Surrender." The devotee should abandon all dharmas and surrender his mind and body to the Divine

### **The Day and Night of the Cosmos**

There are alternating periods of Cosmic manifestations and non-manifestations called Day and Night respectively, each of them is calculated to be of  $432 \times 10^9$  years. At the beginning of the Day, all the souls come into being and the Prakriti starts its play of producing a variety of things. The individual souls form their bodies by drawing in the various elements of Prakriti and the disequilibrium between the Satva, Rajas and Tamas gunas produces all the variety of things we see in the world.

The play of Prakriti continues during the Day and the souls that have attained liberation, merge in the Divine. At the close of the Day, the gunas of Prakriti come into equilibrium and Prakriti becomes homogenous, imperceptible and inactive. During the period of the Night, no activity goes on but at the beginning of the next Day, the same activity comes into being. This cycle of Day and Night continues indefinitely. This is the belief as preached in the Gita in the following verses.

(8)17—They who know (the true measure of) Day and Night know the Day of Brahma, a thousand ages (Yugas), in duration, and the Night which (also, ends in a thousand Yugas).

(8)18—At the approach of Day, all manifestations proceed from unmanifested states ; at the approach of the Night, they all vanish into that which is called the Unmanifested.

(8)19—The very same multitude of beings (that existed in the preceding Day) being born again and again, is dissolved at the approach of the Night, and is born into being at the coming of the Day.

(9)7—At the end of a cycle, all existences return into My Divine Prakriti and at the beginning of cycle, I send them forth again.

(9)8—Animating My Prakriti, I project again and again the multitude of existences, all helplessly under the control of Prakriti.

### Path of Death.

The following is a peculiar belief found in ancient books which the Gita seems to believe in and records in its teachings

(8)23—I shall tell thee of that time wherein Yogins departing return not and also that wherein departing they return

(8)24—Fire, light, day time, the bright fortnight of the northern solstice of the Sun, taking this path, the knowers of Brahman go to Brahman.

(8)25—Smoke, night-time, the dark fortnight, the dark fortnight of the Southern solstice of the Sun,

taking the path, the knowers of Brahman, attaining the human light, return to earth.

(8)26—Truly there are bright and dark paths of the world eternal ; by the one departs one who does not return, by the other he who returns again.

(8)27—The Yogin who knows them is not deluded into error. Therefore be thou steadfast in Yoga at all times.

(8)28—Whatever fruits of meritorious deeds are declared to accrue from (study of) the Vedas—(such as) sacrifice, austerities and charitable gifts, the Yogins have known this (truths of the Divine); rise above all this and attain to the primeval, supreme Abode.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE DIVINE

The Gita describes the Divine in His two aspects or as two Purushas. These two Purushas are as what we see Him through our physical eye and the soul respectively. With the physical eye we see Him as Many, Mutable, Personal, Active and Qualityful. This Purusha is called the Kshara. When however we still the mind by contemplating on the mind by the mind itself we perceive Him as the One, Immutable, Inactive and Qualityless. This Purusha is called the Akshara.

The Gita says that these are two aspects of the Divine who is Purushotama (the Great Purusha), Parmatman (the Great Self), Parmeshwara (the Great Lord). He is the Akshara and the Kshara at the same time and also transcends both.

The Infinite Transcendent Divine pervades everywhere and all existences exist in Him. But in another sense the existences do not exist in Him for He transcends them. Just as the wind moves in ether and can be said to exist in ether but there is nothing common between the two, similarly we can say that the existences exist in

Him but at the same time there is nothing common between the two, for He transcends them. Again just as ether is not affected by these existences or by their movements, so the Divine pervading the body is not affected by our body or by the movements of the body. He is as if sitting apart, indifferent, unattached. He neither initiates actions nor notes the virtue or sin of actions, nor gives the fruits of actions. At the same time He is the Sustainer, Creator and Destroyer of all existences. He is present in all actions, manifests Himself in all relationships, is Guide and Refuge, is Knowledge and the Object of Knowledge, the Source of power, of action and of all qualities, feelings and emotions

We have to realise these three aspects of the Divine, the Kshara, the Akshara and the Transcendent. He is all these at one and the same time and is there in all existences and everywhere undivided and with His full Infinite Consciousness at every place

But the Divine is not revealed to all. We see Him in the aspect of the Kshara, the Many. But in this aspect He reveals only a part of His infinite consciousness according to the scale of evolution, in which a creature is and the rest remains latent in it as the Soul or the basis of life or consciousness. Thus although He is present in all living beings, we see only the phenomena, the apparent self or the form of the Prakriti of the three gunas and not the Reality. The Reality is more luminous than the Sun, but it is concealed from our eyes. Only the souls having attained the Divine Status, can see Him.

## 1 The Three Purushas

The Gita regards the world as real and not illusory as some systems of philosophy do. There must be a truth in what we perceive by our minds and senses. We perceive infinite varieties of matter, forces, plants, insects, animals and also human beings. Since He is the One, all these must be His manifestations under the limitations of Time and Space. All these existences are mutable, perishable, active and possessed of several qualities. We also see that there is an evolution in this world. Starting from matter and developing into an ascending scale of life and mind, the last stage reached is man. We can imagine that this evolution will continue till the Superconscious stage is reached. In other words, the Divine keeps the whole of His Infinite Consciousness latent in matter and reveals it more and more as evolution proceeds till in the Superconscious stage the whole of His Infinite Consciousness is revealed and nothing remains latent. This partial appearance of His Consciousness in the different stages of evolution is the cause of ignorance, evil and the dualities of good and bad, virtue and sin, happiness and sorrow, etc. No body knows why the Divine reveals Himself partially to our mind, but we know that this is so. Our religious books describe it as a Lila or play of the Divine.

The Gita describes this phenomenon in its philosophy of Para and Apara Prakriti, described in a separate chapter. This philosophy is simple and easily understood by human mind. We know that every individual has a soul or spirit and a body. It is the former which gives

consciousness to the latter and again it is the former which remains, when the latter dies. These are thus two quite distinct principles.

Whatever we perceive with our minds and senses must be He Himself or the result of His power, *Apara Prakriti*. The Gita calls this aspect of the Divine as *Kshara*.

But there is the soul in all existences, which is the real source of consciousness and power, although it does not seem to act. We do not ordinarily perceive the soul, because our mind cannot do so and is always thinking of things of the outside world. Even when we sit idle, the mind is at work thinking of several things. When we go to sleep, the sub-conscious mind continues to work in the form of dreams. Unless we control the mind, it is not possible to perceive the soul. If, however, we control our minds and senses and contemplate on mind with the mind itself, the mind is perfectly stilled and we see the Spirit in all its glory. We find that the Spirit is not confined to our body but pervades through the universe and beyond. All the objects fade away from our view and the eternal Self-Conscious, Self-Delight of being remains everywhere. This aspect of the Divine is called *Akshara*. It is the One, Immutable, Impersonal, Inactive, Qualityless and invisible to human mind. The *Kshara* however is the Many, Mutable, Personal, Active, Qualityful and visible to human mind.

But how is it, that the One Divine appears to us in two mutually contradictory aspects? The reason is that it is impossible for the finite human mind, of very limited

power, to imagine the unity of the Infinite Divine. We are used to seeing only finite things and cannot imagine that a thing can be at two places at the same time. But the Infinite Consciousness of the Divine is everywhere and it is possible for Him to be One and Many at the same time.

The Divine is the One, and He transcends His two aspects, the Akshara and the Kshara, which we perceive, one with the mind and the other with the soul. He is called Purushotama (the Highest Spirit) and also Parmatman (the Highest Self) and Ishwara (the Lord). He cannot be divided. He is in the atom, in the leaf of a tree, in an insect, animal or man and in each with His full undivided Infinite Self-Consciousness. There is no limit to the variety or division of the Infinite Divine. He is in the infinitesimal as well as in the Infinite with the same Infinite Consciousness everywhere. We have to thoroughly grasp the fact of the Unity of the Divine, although we perceive Him in His two aspects, before we can understand other truths of the Divine and the Truth of our existence.

**(15)16—**There are two Purushas (Spiritual beings) in the world, the Akshara (Immutable or Brahman) and the Kshara (Mutable and Personal); all beings are the Mutable; the Kutastha (Consciousness of the Brahmanic Status or the Self or Soul) is called the Immutable.

**(15)17—**But (there is) another, the Purushotama (the Highest Spirit) called Paramatman (the Highest

Self), the Immutable Ishwara (the Lord), Who pervades the three worlds (the Earth, the Mid-regions and the Heaven).

(8)20—But beyond this unmanifested (the Akshara), there is another unmanifested, External Existence (Purushotama), which is not destroyed at the destruction of all beings.

(8)21—He is called the Unmanifest, Immutable ; Him they speak of as Purushotama (the Highest Spirit) and Supreme Status. That is My Highest State, having attained which, there is no return (to the world).

The human beings who attain the Divine Status are not born again but become Immortal and the same as the Divine. Ordinary human beings take birth according to the aggregate of impressions in the last life or according to the prevailing ideas at the time of death and thus remain in the whirl of the cycles of birth and death; but he who has attained the Divine Status is not born again.

(15)18—As I (the Purushotama) transcend the Mutable (Kshara) and am superior even to the Immutable (Akshara), I am proclaimed as the Purushotama in the world and in the Veda (religious books).

The One Divine called Purushotama, appears to us in the two aspects, the Akshara (Immutable) when viewed through the Soul, and the Kshara (Mutable) when viewed

through the mind and senses. These two aspects are mutually contradictory to each other. But He, the Divine, transcends them both. He is the Akshara and the Kshara, at the same time, but exceeds them both.

## 2. The Divine is transcendent.

(9)1—The Blessed Lord said: what I shall verily declare to thee, who does not find fault (but has absolute faith in Me), is the most profound knowledge of all, with the empirical knowledge, by knowing which, thou shalt become free from sin.

(9)2—This knowledge is the King (highest) of all mysteries; it is the most superior science; it is holy, excellent, endowed with merit, realisable by direct perceptions, very easy to observe and of imperishable nature.

(9)4—All the world is pervaded by Me (the Purushotama) in My manifested forms. All existences exist in Me; I do not dwell in them.

Although unmanifest to the human mind, He pervades everywhere and so all existences exist in Him. But He is so much greater than all the existences and from the Universe, that He cannot be said to dwell in them.

(9)5—Nor do all existences (in reality) exist in Me; behold My Divine Yoga. Myself brings forth and support the existences (but) not dwelling in the existences.

In another sense all existences do not dwell in Him.

These existences are an aspect of the Divine called Kshara or as explained in the next chapter, they are phenomena of His two powers, the Para and Apra Prakritis. But the Purushotama transcends the Kshara as well as the Akshara and also His two powers and so these existences cannot be said to exist in Him. The next two verses make it clearer.

He, the Infinite, limits Himself in the form of perceptible finite things under the limitations of Time and Space by His own mysterious power (called Yoga Maya). He is the creator of all existences and supports them, but He does not dwell in them, for He transcends them all. See the next verse.

**(9)6—As the all-pervading wind, moving always everywhere rests in the Akash (ether), know thou, that even so do all existences rest in Me.**

Ether is the stable, immutable principle of space. The air moves in space and in a sense air can be said to exist in space or in ether. But in another sense, air has nothing in common with space or ether. Similarly all the existences exist in Purushotama, but He has nothing in common with these existences.

### **3. He is Omnipresent.**

**(7)7—Beyond me (the Purushotama), there is nothing. On Me all that is here, is strung like pearls upon a thread.**

The Purushotama is the only Reality in the



universe As will be explained in the next chapter there are two powers of the Divine, one called the Para Prakriti, becomes the Jiva or individual soul the other called the Apara Prakriti is responsible for matter and energy All beings are formed by the union of soul and Prakriti All the different in-animate objects are made by the different proportions of Satva, Rajas and Tamas gunas of Prakriti As both Para and Apara Prakritis are powers of Divine, the Divine is the link penetrating through all existences

**(13)34—As the one Sun illumines the entire earth, so the Lord of Field (i. e. the Divine), illumines the entire Field (the Universe).**

He pervades the Universe in a similar way as the Sun illumines the earth This analogy is not to be taken literally The Sun only illumines the surface, but He pervades throughout

**4. The Divine neither acts nor is affected by works.**

**(13)32—Being without origin and qualityless, this Immutable Parmatman (supreme Self), though seated in the body, neither acts, nor is affected (i. e. not touched by the actions).**

**(13)33—As this all-pervading ether by reason of its subtlety is not affected (by different objects and beings existing and moving about in it), so the Self seated everywhere in the body is not affected by it.**

The Self or the Purushotama pervades throughout

the body, but is not affected by the body or by the works done by it just as objects or existences are not affected by ether in which they exist or move about.

(9)9—The works (creation, sustenance and dissolution) 'do not bind Me, sitting as one indifferent, unattached to them.

(5)14—The Lord neither creates the actions of the world, nor agency (the doer of works), nor the union of the work to the fruits, but inherent nature (Svabhav) does this all.

Svabhav is the inherent spiritual quality that does all works through Prakriti. See the chapter on "Svabhav"

(5)15—The all-pervading Impersonal does not take note of the virtue or sin of any; knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, hence creatures are bewildered.

The Divine is qualityless, perfect and can have no motive for anything. It is the Prakriti that does everything. He transcends the Akshara as well as the Kshara, the Immutable as well as the Mutable aspect of the Divine. In human beings, Self-knowledge is enveloped by ignorance, for the Divine reveals in the mind and the senses, only as much consciousness as is needed to maintain ourselves. But we have the Buddhi, or Reason and will and can, by self-control and contemplation attain to Self-knowledge and Self-wisdom. This is of course attained by very few. Ordinarily Self knowledge is

enveloped by ignorance of the mind and senses

## 5. Creator, Sustainer, and Destroyer.

(14)1—The Blessed Lord said : I will again tell thee that supreme knowledge which is the highest of all knowledge, having known which all the sages have attained to high perfection.

(14)2—They who have devoted themselves to this knowledge have attained to My Being ; they are neither born at the time of creation, nor troubled at the time of the Universal dissolution.

As explained in chapter three, there are cycles of Day and Night (each =  $432 \times 10^8$  yrs.) of the Cosmos. At the beginning of the Day, souls take up bodies and evolution starts. Those souls that are not liberated, during the period of the Day, remain in slumber during the Night and are born again when the next Day starts. But the souls that have been liberated and attained the Divine Status are neither born at the time of creation or beginning of the Day, nor are troubled at the time of Dissolution : i.e. at the end of the Day. They become immortal and merge in the Divine.

(14)3—My womb is the Mahat Brahman (Prakriti); into that I cast the seed ; from thence is the birth of all beings.

(14)4—Whatever forms are produced in whatsoever wombs, Mahat Brahman (Prakriti) is their womb and I am the Father Who cast the seed.

The Divine is at once the Father and Mother of all beings and existences in the Universe. As the universal Spirit, the Father, He casts the seed into Prakriti, the Mother, which is a Power of the Divine, and from this union, all beings are born, composed of individual souls and finite matter (*Prakriti*)

**(10)6—The seven Ancients of the world and also the four Manus are My mental becomings ; from them are all these living creatures in the world.**

The seven Ancients are the seven intelligence powers of the Divine Wisdom. The four Manus are the Spiritual fathers representing Knowledge, Power, Harmony and Work. These are mentioned in the Vedas. They are the creators of this life which depends for its existence on the mind

**(9)18—.....I am the birth, status and dissolution of all existences ; I the imperishable seed of all and their eternal resting place.**

**(15)13—Entering the earth with My energy, I support all beings. Becoming the Soma-rasa (the sap in the mother earth), I nourish vegetable life.**

**(15)14—Becoming the flame of life, I sustain the physical body of living beings and uniting with Prana and Apana (the outgoing and incoming breaths), digest the four kinds of food (i. e. food which has been masticated, sucked, licked or swallowed).**

## 6. Present in all parts of a work.

(9)16—I, the ritual action, I the sacrifice, I the food-oblation I the fire-giving herb, the mantra (hymn) I, I also the butter, I the flame, the offering I

All the above i.e. action sacrifice, food-oblation herb hymn butter, flame, offering, are the parts of a vedic ritual sacrifice when hymns are chanted and butter thrown into the fire. This is only an example and is meant to convey the idea that all works and all parts of a work are He Himself. He is the only Reality in the universe. He manifests Himself in different forms.

## 7. The Divine is not revealed to all.

(7)24—The ignorant regard Me (the Purushotama), the Unmanifest, having come into manifestation (in different forms of beings), know not My supreme state—Immutable and Transcendent.

(7)25—Nor am I revealed to all, veiled in My Yogmaya. This deluded world knows Me not, the Unborn, the Immutable.

Yogmaya is the power of the Divine by which He the Infinite manifests Himself under the limitations of time and space in the form of different finite beings and objects of limited understanding. As will be shown in Chaps 7 and 8, all living beings consist of two distinct and independent elements, soul and body. The body is made of Prakriti a Power of the Divine, but the Divine Himself is concealed under this phenomenon of body.

in the form of individual soul, which is the same as the Divine. We can perceive the body and all its parts i.e. Buddhi, Ahankara, Mind, Tanmatras and their evolutes, but our minds cannot perceive the soul or the Divine in us. The body is like a veil which conceals the Divine from our view. It is only when the mind is stilled by self-control and by contemplation of the mind itself, that the Soul or the Divine is revealed

(7)26—I know all past, all present, and future existences but Me none yet knows.

(8)9—.....His form is unthinkable (but) He is refulgent as the Sun, beyond darkness.

When the Soul or the Divine reveals itself, it is refulgent as the Sun. It is absolute Light and there is no duality of light and darkness as in this world. Yet, He is concealed from our mind and senses and we cannot even think of Him, as he is beyond the orbit of our understanding

(9)11—Fools disregard Me lodged in the human form, being unaware of My supreme Status, as the great Lord of beings.

The illusion (Maya) of His Yogmaya (the power to limit Himself in the limitations of Time and Space) is that although He is one with the universe, yet he is beyond it ; He is Immanent, yet not revealed to any

(9)12—All their hopes, works and knowledge are vain and senseless ; they are possessed of the delusion

### **of Rakshasas and Asuras.**

Ordinary men possessed of strong Rajasic nature (Rakshasas and Asuras) have very limited knowledge, all their hopes and works, are vain and senseless. Their desires envelop knowledge and their works and hopes are therefore vain.

(9)13—But the great-souled ones, possessed of the Divine nature, know Me as the Origin of all beings and Immutable; so knowing, they worship Me with a sole and entire love.

(9)14—Always adoring Me, striving with firm resolve, bowing down to Me with devotion, they worship Me.

Only those persons who have realised the Self or the Divine, know Him.

### **8. Manifests in all relationships.**

(9)17—I the Father of the world, the Mother, the Ordainer, the first Creator .

(9)18—I the Master, the Witness . the benignant Friend .

### **9. Guide and Refuge.**

(9)18—I the path and goal, the upholder the house, the country, the refuge ... .

### **10. Knowledge and the object of knowledge.**

(9)17—I the object of knowledge, the sacred syllable

OM and also the Rik, Sama and Yajur (vedas).

(15)15—I am lodged in the hearts of all ; memory and knowledge and their loss come from Me. I am that which has to be known by all the Vedas. I am the author of the Vedanta and knower of the Veda.

# 11. Source of Power and Action.

(9)19—I give heat, I withhold and send forth rain ; immortality and also death.....

(15)12—The light of the Sun that illumines all this world, that which is in the moon and the fire, that light know as from Me.

# 12. All powers, qualities, feelings, proceed from the Divine.

(10)4-5—Understanding, knowledge, freedom from delusion, forbearance, truth, restraint of the external senses, calmness of heart, pleasure and grief, birth and death, fear and fearlessness, non-injury, equality, contentment, austerity, benevolence, good name and ill name—(these) different kinds of qualities of beings arise from Me.

(7)12—Whatever states pertaining to Satva, and those pertaining to Rajas and to Tamas—(such as desires, feelings, emotions), know these to proceed from Me ; but I am not in them ; it is these that are in Me.



The qualities of pleasure and grief fear and fearlessness, good name and ill name, and the like among other qualities, also proceed from the Divine. The Gita does not say that only good qualities proceed from Him but all qualities good or bad proceed from Him.

The good and bad are really relative terms. There is nothing absolute in this world. The very idea of good implies that there is something of the reverse order. The good and bad, like light and shade, are inseparable from one another.

The very idea of good and bad, implies a power of discrimination or reason. Animals do not possess this power. In the evolution of this world, this power appeared in man, for the first time and is the basis of our morality and progress towards liberation.

and even the smallest imaginable atom is as important to Him as the whole universe. He is not only extra cosmic but pervades the whole universe and resides in the heart of every one. He does nothing without any purpose. There is a purpose in the creation of this world which is to lead all the multiple souls to realise their unity with the Divine and to be one with Him. He does everything to fulfil this purpose of His Creation. He leads or guides all existences in all the stages of evolution of this world starting from the so called inanimate matter through innumerable species of plant and animal life to man. His last handiwork. Man has yet to travel a long way on the path of evolution before the race can become fit for union with the Divine. But the developed mind of man is able to understand some of the methods employed by the Divine designed to help man in the path of realisation.

An Avatar comes to this world at critical periods of human history to help man to attain his goal. We know that the soul of man takes birth again and again to gain experiences in this world which enables it to advance on the path of evolution. It chooses its mind and body at birth according to the mental development reached at the time of last death of the gross body and its prevailing ideas at that moment. We know that some men in the past had reached their goal and their souls were liberated to unite with the Divine and that they were released from further births and deaths. There is nothing strange or unreasonable to believe that a liberated soul consciously takes birth simply for helping mankind to realise their objective. But a liberated soul is the Divine Himself.

and works according to the Divine will. It comes to this, then, that the Divine Himself takes up a human body to help man in the realization of the Self and in becoming one with Him. He takes birth from age to age, at times when the Divine help is needed in the form of an Avtar. He selects His own body according to the work, he has to perform in this world. The difference between an Avtar and an ordinary man is that the former is the Divine consciously descending into the form of a human being, while an ordinary man has to ascend to that Divine status through cycles of births and deaths. The Avtar has control of His Prakriti, while an ordinary man is subject to Prakriti. The power of Prakriti acts through the mind, senses etc of an individual according to the stage of development reached by him in the evolution. But an Avtar has full control over the Prakriti.

To this, a sceptic can raise an objection, that the Divine, who is the All-wise and Omnipotent could achieve the purpose of guiding mankind without resorting to a human birth. But in answer, we could put the question as to why should the Divine resort to indirect methods, when the direct method is the most suitable ?

The purpose of the Divine birth is the protection of the good, the destruction of the wicked, the establishment of Dharma and to show by His example that it is possible for the finite human being to possess divine qualities and to attain to Divine Status. The Avtar shows by His example, how to work unattached. By His spiritual force, He becomes a leader of men, preaches the

fundamental principles of existence evolves a social and political order most suitable for the people of his times. He comes at a time when Divine guidance is necessary. Long after his death the power of his spiritual force remains vibrating in the hearts of men and it is only when the peak is reached and there is the danger of a downward movement, that another Avtar appears to give another impetus to spiritual progress and thus keep the line of progress always in the ascent.

The verses in the Gita on the subject of Avtar are as follows

# 1. The birth of the Avtar.

(4)1—The Blessed Lord said : I proclaimed the Imperishable Yoga to Vivasan (the Sun-God); Vivasan told it to Manu (the father of men); Manu told it to Ikshvaku, (the head of the Solar line).

(4)2—Thus handed down from one to another, the royal sages knew it, till it was lost by long lapse of time

(4)3—This same ancient Yoga has been to-day declared to thee by Me, for thou art My devotee and My friend ; this is the highest secret.

(4)4—Arjuna said : Later was Thy birth and earlier was the birth of Vivasan. How then am I to understand that thou declarest this to him in the beginning.

(4)5—The Blessed Lord said : Many are My lives that are past and thine also O, Arjuna<sup>1</sup> ; all of them

I know, but thou knowest not.

This imperishable Yoga is the integral Yoga preached in the Gita. The Gita wants us first to be desireless, impersonal and have equality of mind for attaining the Divine. For this purpose we must have union with the Eternal, Immutable, Inactive, aspect of the Divine, the Akshara. We want the help of the Immutable spirit, a principle of higher order than the mind, to control the vagaries of mind, to forsake this false ego and to regard all with equalness of mind. But a union with the Akshara would mean a cessation of all actions, which the Gita forbids. The Gita says that there is a higher status of the Divine, the Purushotama, Who appears to us in His two aspects, the Akshara and the Kshara, the Immutable Self and the Mutable Person. By uniting with the Purushotama, which we can do only by Bhagti or true devotion, we remain in union with the Divine, and also carry out works according to the Divine will through Prakriti, i.e. through our mind and body working under the force of Prakriti. This is the integral way of realising the Divine.

It is apparent from the above verses that the Avatar takes different births and selects the elements of mind, life and body according to the work He has to do in this world, on each occasion.

(4)6—Though I am the Unborn, the Imperishable in My Self-existence, though I am the Lord of all existences, yet standing on My Prakriti, I come into being by My own Maya.

political order. It is evident that this Dharma would differ in different ages according to the stage of development of the people. The fundamental principles of Dharma are based on the spiritual experiences of saints, but their interpretation in human words must differ with different stages of the development of people. Therefore the methods of attaining the goal will be different in different ages. Social and political orders change even in the life-time of an individual. It is thus that the need of an Avtar is felt in every age

**(4)13—The fourfold order (the division of people in four classes according to their svabhav), was created by Me according to the division of guna and karma (quality and action). Though I am the author of it, know Me Immutable and Non-Doer.**

The Dharma also includes social order. The fourfold order is dealt with in the chapter on Svabhav.

(ii) To serve as an example to human beings

**(3)22—I have no work that I need do in all the three worlds (physical, vital and mental). I have nothing that I have gained and have yet to gain, yet I am engaged in work.**

**(3)23-24—For if I did not engage in work unwearied, these peoples who follow in every way my path, would sink to destruction if I did not work and I should be the Creator of disordered life and destroy these people.**

**(4)14—Works do not bind Me nor have I any desire for the result of actions**

The Avatar by his example teaches the people that it is necessary to work but without attachment

It is necessary for us to realise this and to follow the example of the Divine. The Avatar comes to the world to teach us by his example and precepts that it is possible for human beings to attain the Divine status by following certain lines of action as preached in the Gita

## CHAPTER VI

### God's manifestations (vibhutis).

When we aspire to know the Reality and have been learning the truths about it from saints and teachers or through our own efforts, for some time, there comes a stage when our doubts are removed and we have complete faith in the truths of the Reality. Then arises a longing to find these truths in the different objects and beings in this world. We believe that everything in the world is His becoming, and our heart yearns to know more and more about them. Our longing can be satisfied only when we realise the Self and are in unity with the Immutable, the Eternal, the Akshara aspect of the Divine. But till that happens, our heart is in a flux. It wants to know more and more about Him and the only way yet open to us is to know about His works, in the hope of catching a glimpse of the Master of these works. We find, however, that in this world, there are good as well as bad men; there are fearful beasts of prey and lovely birds; abominable insects and the beautiful butterfly. Are all these His becomings? When we ponder over it, our knowledge offers an explanation and we feel satisfied. We come to know that all these are in different stages of evolution.



(10)12-13—Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purity, the One. All the Rishis—the Divine seer Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa have declared Thee Eternal, the Self-Luminous Purusha, the Original Godhead, the Unborn and All-pervading Lord and Thy Thyself sayest it to me.

(10)14—I accept all that Thou sayest to me as true, verily O, Bhagwana! (God). Thy manifestations, neither the Gods nor the Titans do know.

(10)15—Verily, Thou Thyself knowest Thyself by Thyself, O, Purushotama, Source of Beings, Lord of Beings, God of gods, Master of the world!

(10)16—Thou shouldest indeed tell me without reserve Thy divine Self-manifestations by which Thou standest pervading these worlds.

(10)17—How shall I, O Yogin, ever meditating, know Thee? In what becomings, O Bhagwan, art Thou to be thought of by me?

(10)18—Tell me in detail of Thy Yoga and Vibhūtis, and tell me ever more of it. It is nectar of immortality to me and however much of it I hear, I am not satiated.

Lord Sri Krishna on hearing this agreed to narrate His divine vibhūtis (becomings in this world) But as it is evidently impossible to describe all His becomings, He begins with the following words :—

(10)19—I shall tell thee of My Divine vibhūtis ; but only in some of My pre-eminences, for there is no end to particulars of My Manifestations.

After narrating His principal pre-eminences, Lord Sri Krishna re-iterates this point at the end in the following words —

(10)41—Whatever great, glorious and powerful being there is, that know thou to be the result of a part of My Splendour.

(10)42—But what need is there of a multitude of details, for this knowledge ? (Know thou this that) I am here in this world everywhere and support this entire world with an infinitesimal portion of Myself.

The description of the Divine vibhūtis (becomings of the Divine) seems to be without any arrangement or order. But we can classify them and it will be seen that the Teacher has narrated all the principal aspects of the Divine manifestations in these few verses

### 1. The Self

(10)20—I am the Self that exists in the hearts of all beings

### 2. Creator, Sustainer & Destroyer

(10)20 & (10)32—I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all beings (i. e. I am the creator, sustainer and destroyer of all beings).

(10)22— . I am mind among senses; in living

beings I am consciousness.

(10)34—I am the all seizing Death and Prosperity of those who are to be prosperous.....

(10)39—And whatsoever is the seed of all beings, that also am I ; nothing moving or unmoving, animate or inanimate in the world can exist without Me.

### 3. Time

(10)33—I am the imperishable Time; I am the Master (of all existences) whose faces are everywhere.

(10)30—.....I am Time, the head of all reckoning to those who reckon.....

### 4. Gods

(10)21—Among the Adityas (Vedic gods), I am Vishnu..... I am Marichi among the Maruts (the 49 wind gods of the Vedas).

(10)22—.....I am Vasara (Indra) among the gods.

(10)23—I am Shiva among the Rudras (the 11 vedic gods called Rudras), the Lord of wealth (Kuvera) among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, Agni among the Vasus (the 8 gods called Vasu).

(10)24—Of the high priests of the world, the chief, Brihaspati (the priest of god Indra). I am Skanda, the war-god, leader of the leaders of battle.....

(10)30—I am Prahlada among the Titans.....

(10)26— I am Chitraratha among the Gandharvas

(10)28— I am Kandarpa, the Love god among the progenitors

(10)29— I am Aryaman among the Fathers (the ancestors)

(10)29— I am Yama (god of Law) among those who maintain law and order

(10)26 - I am Narada among the divine sages  
Muni Kapila among the Siddhas (the perfect Yogis)

(10)37—I am Krishna among the Vrishnis, Arjuna among the Pandvas, I am Vyasa among the sages, I am Ushanas among the seer poets

Note —Krishna the Avatar is at the same time the Vibhuti & leader of the age

(10)27 Among men I am king of men

(10)25—I am Bhrigu among the great rishis

(10)31— I am Ram among the warriors

## 6 Feminine qualities

(10)34 Of the feminine qualities, I am glory, beauty, speech memory, intelligence, constancy and forbearance

## 7. All human qualities

(10)36—I am the gambling of the cunning strength

of the powerful; I am resolution, perseverance and victory ; I am satvic quality of the good.

(10)38—I am the power of all who seem to rule. I am the policy of those who seem to conquer. I am the silence of things secret and the knowledge of the knower.

## 8. Knowledge

(10)22—Among the Vedas, I am the Sam Veda.....

(10)32 .....I am spiritual knowledge among the many philosophies, arts and sciences. I am the logic of those who debate.

(10)33—I am the letter A among letters, the dual among compounds.....

(10)25—.....I am the sacred syllable OM among words.....

## 9. Worship

(10)25—I am the worship called Japa (silent repetitions of sacred names etc).....

(10)35—I am also the great Sama among Mantras, the Gayatri among meters.....

## 10. Heavenly bodies

(10)21 —.....Among the lights, I am the radiant Sun..... Among the stars, the Moon am I.

## 11. Physical phenomena

(10)23— Meru among the peaks of the world  
am I

(10)24— Among the jhils, I am the ocean.

(10)25— Among the mountain ranges I am the  
Himalaya.

(10)28— Among the weapons I am the thunder-  
bolt

(10)31—I am the wind among purifiers      Among  
the rivers, Ganges am I

(10)35— Among the months, I am Margasirsha,  
first of the month ; I am spring, the fairest of the  
seasons

## 12. Animals and Plants

(10)27—Uchchaisravas among horses know, nectar-  
born (which came into existence at the time of the  
churning the ocean for nectar) ; Airavata among  
the lordly elephants.

(10)28—I am Kamdhuk, the cow of plenty among  
cattle ; among the serpents, the vasuki am I.

(10)29—And I am Ananta among the Nagas, Varuna  
among the dwellers of the Sea.

(10)30—And among the beasts of forests, I am  
the lord of the beasts and vainateya among birds.

(10)31—.....And I am the alligator among the fishes.....

(10)26—I am the Pipal among plants and trees.....

(10)40—There is no limit to My Divine vibhuti.  
This is a brief statement by Me of My divine vibhuti.

## CHAPTER VII

### PARA AND APARA PRAKRITIS

We have seen in a previous chapter that the Divine manifests Himself to us in His two aspects the Akshara and the Kshara. In the former aspect He appears to us as the One Immutable Self-conscious spirit that pervades the universe and is Inactive. We can perceive it when we reach the superconscious stage. The other aspect is the many forms of life and objects which we see with our eyes and which are always changing name and form and seem to be active.

Let us now analyze the mutable aspect of the Divine. We find that every living being is made up of (1) a spiritual principle, a soul which is the basis of life and consciousness, and (2) a body or matter. The Gita says that the soul as well as matter are made out of His Divine Powers. The soul is the becoming of a superior power of the Divine called Para Prakriti and matter, of a lower power of the Divine called Apara Prakriti.

The soul or Self is in its essence the same as the Divine but it has also an individual aspect. It maintains its individuality in the cycles of birth and death and in



its evolution. The soul is only a witness or enjoyer of the work of Prakriti. It is also the source of life and consciousness or supporter of the actions of Prakriti. When a being dies, the soul takes with it the subtle body, which is also gradually cast away. The soul then takes new materials of mind, senses and tan-matras from the mental and physical planes, according to the experiences gained in its last life. Only the yogins perceive the soul.

Matter and material forces are made of Apara Prakriti which is practically the same as the Prakriti of the Sankhyas. These two agree in all details but differ only in fundamentals. The Sankhya philosophers hold that Prakriti and Purusha are independent principles. There are as many Purushas as the number of living beings and that there is no Divine. The Gita, however, holds that Prakriti is a power of the Divine. The Sankhyas make out 23 elements of Prakriti, comprising buddhi, ahankar, mind, 5 senses of perception, 5 elements of action, 5 tanmatras and 5 primordial elements. The Gita recognizes only 8 i.e. buddhi, ahankar, mind, and 5 tanmatras. Others are evolutes of these 8. The Gita holds that the world came into being by the will of the Divine and that Prakriti works according to the Divine will. In all other details, Prakriti of the Sankhyas is the same as the Apara Prakriti of the Gita.

Prakriti is without origin as Purusha is. All the modifications of the elements of Prakriti, and all their qualities are born of Prakriti. All activity in the world is due to Prakriti. The Purusha or soul is inactive. The

chain of cause and effect is due to Prakriti and it is because the purusha identifies itself with Prakriti that it has to take new birth. The gunas of Prakriti which cause all the changes in the world and are perceivable bewilder people. They serve as veils to the Soul or the Reality in us. We see the result of changes of the gunas of Prakriti and not the soul itself. None is free from the gunas of Prakriti.

The Gita describes the gunas of Prakriti in detail. The Gita also describes the analogy of Ashwattha tree for Prakriti which is also found in other religious books of the Hindus.

In the Gita Lord Sri Krishna begins the description of the two Prakritis Para and Apra in the following words —

**(7)1—Hear, how by practising Yoga with a mind intent on Me, with me as ashrya (support or refuge), thou shalt know Me, without any remainder of doubt, integrally**

**(7)2 I shall speak to thee fully, the essential knowledge with all the comprehensive knowledge, by knowing which there shall be no other thing here left to be known**

The sense is that since the Divine is the only Reality in the Universe if we have essential and comprehensive knowledge of this Reality nothing else remains to be known.

(7)3—One perhaps in thousands of men, strives after perfection, and of those who strive and attain perfection, one perhaps knows Me in all the principles of My existence.

### 1. Para-Prakriti

(7)5—This the lower (Prakriti). But know thou My Para-Prakriti (higher Prakriti) different from this, which becomes the Jiva (soul) and by which the world is upheld.

When the One Infinite, Self-conscious and All-pervading Divine comes into the limitations of Time and Space and manifests Himself in the form of separate and finite existences, each finite existence is found to be made up of two independant principles. One is the soul, a becoming of the higher Prakriti of the Divine. This forms the basis of life and consciousness and remains invisible to the human mind. The other consisting of the body is made up of lower Prakriti and is visible to human mind. The individual soul is in essence the divine, but differs from it in this respect that it remains attached to the individual and takes up new body after death of the gross body.

(13)23—Witness, source of consent, supporter, enjoyer of the work of Prakriti, Almighty Lord and Supreme Self, is the Parmatman seated in the body.

All the elements of Prakriti, Buddhi, Ahankara, Mind, Tanmatras, and their evolutes or modifications derive consciousness from the soul. The soul, which in

essence is the Divine is the supporter of the actions of Prakriti

**(15)7—It is an eternal portion of Me (the Purush-otama) that becomes the Jiva, in the world of life, draws (to itself) the five senses with mind for the sixth, abiding in Prakriti.**

The Jiva is a portion of the Divine in the same sense as air in a jar is a portion of the air in space. When the gross body dies, and the sheaths of the subtle body also drop one by one, the soul remains in the spiritual world for sometime and then takes up new materials for the mind and senses out of the mental and vital planes, according to the aggregate of impressions formed by it in the previous life.

**(15)8—When the Lord (i. e. the Divine in the form of individual soul) takes up a body (he brings with him mind and senses i. e. the subtle body) and in going forth too (i. e. when he casts away the gross body), he goes taking (the subtle body) as the wind takes the perfume from a vase.**

After death, the soul takes with it the subtle body comprising Buddhi, Mind, and Senses. These are also gradually cast away, and the soul takes up materials for new body as described in the previous verses.

**(15)9—Presiding over the ear, the eye, the touch, the taste, and the smell, as also the mind, He enjoys the objects of mind and senses.**

(15)10—The deluded do not perceive Him in His coming and going or residing (in the body), united with the gunas (of Prakriti); those who have the eye of knowledge, perceive Him.

(15)11—The Yogins who seek (the Divine) perceive Him dwelling in themselves; but the ignorant see Him not, though they strive for it, for they are not spiritually awakened.

## II. Aparā Prakriti.

### 1 The elements of Prakriti

(7)4—Buddhi, ahankar, mind and the five tanmatras are My eight fold divided Prakriti.

As already described, the Gita recognizes 8 elements of Prakriti. The five senses of perception and five senses of action are the evolutes of the 5 tanmatras. The 5 tanmatras are the 5 subtle elements responsible for our five senses of perception. All these details have been described under Sankhya Philosophy.

(13)6—The (five) great elements (tanmatras), ego, buddhi as also the unmanifested (Mula Prakriti), the ten senses and the one (mind), the five objects (i. e. primordial elements:—ether, air, fire, water and earth). (These are the elements or Kshetra according to the Sankhyas).

According to the Sankhya division, we have buddhi, ahankara (ego), mind, five tanmatras, five senses of perception, five senses of action, five primordial elements

and the original Prakriti i.e. 24 in all

2 Prakriti is without origin

**(13)20—**Know that Prakriti and Purusha are both without origin and know also that all modifications and qualities are born of Prakriti

All the different patterns of buddhi different kinds of existences the different senses the modifications of mind such as faith worship courage all kinds of feelings and emotions etc and the modifications of tanmatras i.e. the 5 primordial elements are born of Prakriti. All these have the 3 gunas Satva Rajas and Tamas in more or less proportions which determine their qualities

3 All actions are done by Prakriti

**(13)30—**He who sees that all actions are verily done by Prakriti and that Self (Purusha or soul) is the inactive witness, he sees

**(3)28—**But one, who knows the true principles of gunas and karmas (actions), realizes that it is merely the gunas as senses resting on gunas as objects, he is not attached to them

In this respect the Gita agrees entirely with the philosophy of the Sankhyas. All the elements of Prakriti of which the material world is composed i.e. buddhi ahankar mind 5 tanmatras and all their evolutes and all the forces belong to Prakriti. Prakriti is responsible for all the activity of the world. The force of Prakriti acting through these elements produces results which are

in accordance with the stage of development reached by the elements i. e. in accordance with the proportion of the 3 gunas Satva, Rajas, and Tamas in each of these elements. The Purusha or Soul is only a witness and inactive. The elements of Prakriti however derive consciousness from the soul.

**(9)10—Becoming the presiding control of Prakriti, I cause Prakriti to give birth to the movable and immovable Universe. By reason of this, the world proceeds in cycles.**

As Apra Prakriti is a power of the Divine, it is really He Himself, who brings about the creation of this Universe, is responsible for all activity and for the cycles of birth and death of the world

4 The chain of cause and effect is due to Prakriti

**(13)21—The chain of cause and effect and the state of being the doer are created by Prakriti; Purusha enjoys pleasure and pain.**

A seed, when placed in earth, sprouts into a tree which bears a number of the same quality of seeds. When these seeds go into earth, they sprout in the same way and growing up bear similar seeds. This chain continues indefinitely. Similarly all our thoughts and actions leave their marks on the soul. The aggregate of these marks or impressions determine our character. A thought or the reaction of an action is stored in the subconscious mind or soul and becomes the cause

of similar thoughts and actions under suitable conditions. This chain continues indefinitely. No thought or reaction of an action can be destroyed. It is bound to bear fruit. These can be destroyed only by spiritual knowledge or by working according to the principles of Karma Yoga or by Bhagti or by contemplation of the Divine according to the principles of Raj Yoga.

5 Prakriti is the cause of the bondage of Purusha

**(14)5—The three gunas of Prakriti, Satva, Rajas, and Tamas bind in the body, the imperishable dweller in the body (i. e. the Jiva)**

Purusha identifies itself with the ego of Prakriti and considers itself to be the Doer. This binds the Immutable and Inactive Purusha to the Mutable and Active Prakriti. The body being mutable is born, attains maturity and dies. But the soul by its attachment to Prakriti takes up new body and in this way remains bound in the cycle of birth and death. The Satva binds as much as the Rajas and Tamas. The Satva binds by attachment of the Purusha to knowledge and virtue, the Rajas binds by pleasure and pain in its activities and the Tamas binds by its indolence and inertia.

6 The gunas of Prakriti bewilder people

**(3)27—The gunas of Prakriti perform all actions, but one who is bewildered by egoism thinks: "I am the doer".**

**(7)27—By the delusion of dualities arising from liking and disliking, all beings fall into delusion.**



(7)28—But those men of virtuous deeds whose sin has come to an end, freed from the delusion of dualities worship Me with firm resolve.

(7)13—This whole world is bewildered by these becomings of the three gunas (of Prakriti) and does not recognize Me, Supreme beyond them and Immutable.

(7)14—Verily this is My Divine Maya of the gunas, and it is hard to overcome; those who devote themselves to Me alone, cross over this Maya (illusion).

We can only perceive the different objects in the world which have been formed by the different proportions of the three gunas of Prakriti. We cannot perceive the Divine spirit in us which is the real source of life and consciousness. To perceive the Divine or the Reality in us is the sole object of our existence. We can do so by following the principles of Karam Yog, Jnan Yog, Bhakti Yog and Raj Yog, preached in the Gita.

7. None is free from the gunas of Prakriti

(18)40—There is not an entity either on earth or again among the gods in heaven that is free from the gunas of Prakriti

There are only two principles in the universe, the Spirit and Prakriti. Anything that is not Spirit, is made up of the three gunas of Prakriti.

(14)15—Meeting death when Rajas prevails, he is born among those attached to actions; dying when Tamas prevails, he is born in wombs of beings involved in nescience.

(14)16—It is said, the fruit of works rightly done is pure and Satvic; the fruit of Rajas is pain, and ignorance is the fruit of Tamas.

(14)17—From Satva, knowledge is born and greed from Rajas; miscomprehension, delusion and ignorance from Tamas.

(14)18—They rise upwards who are Satvic; those in Rajas remain in the middle; and Tamasic, abiding in the function of the lowest guna, go downward.

Tamas Rajas and Satva are stages in the evolution of human progress. We should be always moving upwards for if we stay at any stage, we will make no progress. On the contrary if we stay in the Tamasic stage we will go downward.

9 The analogy of Ashwattha tree representing Prakriti

(15)1—The Blessed Lord said: The Ashwattha tree has its roots above, its branches below, it is eternal, its leaves are the hymns of the Vedas; he who knows it, is the Veda-knower.

(15)2—Its branches are spread both below and above, nourished by the gunas; the sense objects are its foliage; below in the world of man stretch forth its

roots of attachment and desire, in which originate actions.

(15)3-4—Its real form can not be perceived by us as such, neither its end, nor its origin, nor its existence; having cut down the firmly rooted Ashwattha by the strong sword of detachment, one should seek for that highest goal, where once having reached it, there is no compulsion to return to mental life ; I seek refuge (says the Vedic verse) in that Primeval Purusha whence streamed forth the Eternal Activity.

The description of the Ashwattha or Cosmic tree is to be found in Vedas, Mahabharata and other books. The whole Cosmos or Prakriti is likened to a tree. Its roots are high above i.e. it has sprung from the one Divine, just as a tree springs from a minute seed. In other words the Cosmos has sprung from the Divine. Its branches are spread both above and below i.e. the Prakriti pervades everywhere. It is nourished by the gunas i.e. Satva, Rajas, and Tamas gunas sustain this Cosmos. All the sense objects of Cosmos are its foliage with their sweet and bitter fruits. Like a banyan tree it sends down roots of attachment and desire in the world of man. Desire and attachment are the causes of Karma (action). If we want to reach the goal i.e. the Divine, we should cut down these roots by the counter weapon of detachment.

**CHAPTER VIII**  
**Kshetrajna and Kshetra**  
**or**  
**Purusha and Prakriti**

In the preceding chapter the Soul and Matter are described as Para and Apara Prakrities which are two separate powers of the Divine. It is by the combination of the two that a living being is formed. In this chapter the same idea is conveyed in a different manner. A living being is made by the combination of Kshetrajna and Kshetra. Kshetra literally means Field and Kshetrajna, Knower of the Field.

The Gita describes the body as the Field (Kshetra) and the Soul as Kshetrajna, knower of the Field. This analogy and its development from various points of view are to be found in the Vedas and Upanishads. Just as we can improve the produce of a field by taking out weeds from the soil by ploughing, manuring, watering and by sowing proper seeds, similarly we can improve the constituents of the body by weeding out desires, by controlling our senses, by developing the satvic quality of different elements in the body and by performing right actions, for as we sow, so shall we reap.

A living body results by the union of Kshetrajna and Kshetra or Purusha and Prakriti. This union gives life and consciousness to all elements of the body i.e. to buddhi, mind, senses and gross body. It also creates a continuity in the impressions caused by the same objects or under the same circumstances. If this had not been the case, there would not have been the same consistency in our experiences and the very purpose of life would have been foiled.

The soul in its essence is the Divine, i.e. the same Divine forms the spiritual basis in all existences and the same Prakriti forms the body of all existences. Thus the universe is the body of the universal soul, just as our body is that of the individual soul. An individual living being is thus a microcosm in the macrocosm of the Universal Being.

But although the individual soul is Divine in its essence, it identifies itself with the ego of Prakriti and feels pleasure and pain in its activity. This attachment of the Immutable Soul with the Mutable Prakriti, results in the cycles of birth and death. Whatever we think or do, leaves an impression on the soul. The aggregate of such impressions make our character. These impressions again become the cause of further actions and this chain of cause and effect is unending. When the gross body dies, the soul takes away the subtle body consisting of buddhi, mind and senses with it. These also gradually drop off and the soul takes new birth, taking new elements of the body and mind from their respective planes, according to the prevailing ideas at the time of death.

It should be remembered however, that the prevailing ideas at death are those which have been forming by the experiences of the life and not what we may represent them to be by the recitation of certain phrases at the time of death

If we meditate on the Divine at the time of death with devotion and concentration and have been consistently remembering Him even when engrossed in our activities we attain to the Divine status and are released from further birth

The man who works without attachment impersonally, rises above the gunas of Prakriti even in this life. He remains in union with the Divine and does all works according to the Divine will. Such a man is called a Trigunatita (above the guns). The Gita gives signs of such a man which are internal. Such a man does not hate the gunas of Prakriti as one would expect him to do. He knows that Tamas, Rajas and Satva are different stages in the development of the soul. He becomes a witness to the working of the gunas of Prakriti in his body and is not affected by them. He is not affected by the feelings which arise by the attachment of the soul to the Prakriti such as the dualities of pleasure and pain, blame and honour etc., or by the value of material wealth.

### **I Kshetra and Kshetrajna.**

The Gita deals with the subject in the following manner

(13)1—Arjuna said: Prakriti and Purusha the Kshetra (Field) and Kshetrajna (Knower of the Field,)

knowledge and that which ought to be known—these I desire to learn.

(13)2—The Blessed Lord said: This body is called the Kshetra ( Field ), that which takes cognizance of Kshetra is called Kshetrajna by those who know them.

The body here comprises Buddhi, Ego, Mind, Tanmatras and Gross body.

(13)3—Know Me ( Purushotama ) to be Kshetrajna in all Kshetras. The knowledge of Kshetra and Kshetrajna is considered by Me to be the real knowledge.

As the individual soul is in essence the same as the Divine and the same Prakriti constitutes the body of the individual soul and also of all bodies in the universe, the Divine is the Kshetrajna in all Kshetras. In other words universe is the body of the universal soul just as individual soul has its own body. A living being is thus a miniature of the universal being.

(13)4—What this Kshetra is, what its properties, source and modifications, and what He is and what His powers, hear that now briefly from Me.

(13)5—It has been sung by Rishis in many ways in various inspired verses; and also by Brahma Sutras which are the philosophic analyses.

Note:—The details of Purusha and Prakriti, separately have been dealt with in the last chapter. The Gita refers to the Vedas and Upanishads for detailed analysis and deals with these subjects only briefly in the Gita. See last chapter.

## 2. Union of Kshetra and Kshetrajna.

(13)27—Whatever being, moving or unmoving, is born know it to be from the union of Kshetra and Kshetrajna.

(13)22—Purusha involved in Prakriti enjoys the gunas of Prakriti ; attachment to the gunas is the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs.

(7)6—Know that from these ( Purusha and Prakriti ) all created beings are created. I am the origin and dissolution of the whole universe ( because both Para and Apra Prakritis i.e. Purusha & Prakriti are His powers )

(13)7—Liking and disliking, pleasure and pain, consciousness, persistence ( these result by the union of Purusha and Prakriti )

The Purusha identifying itself with the workings of Prakriti feels the dualities of liking and disliking, pleasure and pain. These dualities result from the dis-equilibrium in the gunas of Prakriti which produce waves in the mind-stuff. These may be likened to waves in water. The crest of a wave may be considered as the positive aspect and the ebb, the negative aspect of any duality. 'These positive and negative aspects are inseparable from each other, like light and shadow, or the obverse and reverse of a coin'.

A general consciousness results when the Prakriti comes in contact with Purusha which keeps all the constituents of the body together. There is also a continuity or persistence of the subjective and objective relations of our



consciousness with objects. It is this persistence which gives a meaning to life, and from which we gain experiences, and which mould our future life

3. The nature of next life is determined by the impressions of the previous life.

(8)6—Whosoever at the end, abandons the body, thinking upon any form of being, to that form he attains (because) of his devotion to the thought of that object.

Whatever we think or do leaves an impression on the soul and it is the aggregate of these impressions in the course of life which determine our faith, ideals, and these are the prevailing ideas at the time of death. It is not the repetition of the teachings of the Gita at the time of death, but the ideas which we had been growing into during the whole of our physical existence that determine the nature of our prevailing ideas at the time of death

4. The Trigunatita.

(14)19—When the Seer perceives no other agent than the gunas of Prakriti and knows and turns to That which is the Supreme above the gunas, he attains to mad-bhava ( the status of the Divine ).

The gunas of Prakriti make up buddhi, ego, mind, senses and body. It is only when we surrender the ego and rise to Him, Who is above the gunas, that we attain to mad-bhava. We then become Trigunatita i.e. transcend the gunas

(14)20—When the soul rises above these gunas, out of which the body is evolved, he is freed from subjection to birth and death, decay, old age and suffering and attains to the Immortality of Self-existence

(14)26—He who loves and strives after Me, with unswerving devotion, passes beyond the gunas and is fitted to become Brahman

(14)27—I ( the Purushotama ) am the foundation of the Silent Brahman of the Immortal and Immutable, of ever-lasting Dharma and of absolute Bliss

The Soul rising from Brahman, the Immutable Akshara into the Purushotama by devotion experiences the bliss of the union the crown of devotion It reaches above the Rajasic dharma into that Dharma The Truth which is eternal and unchangeable

## 5 Signs of a Trigunatita

(14)21—Arjuna said What are the signs of the man who has risen above the three gunas? What is his conduct and how does he transcend the gunas?

It is a very pertinent question for we can hardly imagine a person transcending the buddhi ego mind senses and body and then remaining alive and carrying out all the activities of life If he is in Yoga with the Self the silent Immutable Inactive Self of the Cosmos called Akshara there is no use of the body for him The Gita says that there is a higher status than Akshara that of the

Purushotama, Who is simultaneously the Akshara and the Kshara, the Immutable or Impersonal and the Mutable or Personal. It is by devotion 'to the Person of the Purushotama, that we can reach that status and then continue to act impersonally according to the Divine will.

**(14)22—He who hates not the appearance of Light (the effect of Satva), activity (the effect of Rajas) and delusion (the effect of Tamas), nor longs after them, when they cease.**

There are no outer signs to distinguish a trigunatita.  
All the signs are internal

One would expect a trigunatita to hate the different stages of the Tamas, the Rajas and Satva, but he does not do so. He has the all-wisdom to understand that these are different stages of the development of the soul. Just as a father has the same love for his infant child (in Tamasic stage) as he has when he grows up into maturity (Rajasic stage) or when he reaches middle life (Satvic stage), similarly a trigunatita loves all

**(14)23—He who sitting as if high above, is not moved by the gunas, who seeing that it is the gunas that are in process of action, is self-centred and moves not.**

The Trigunatita is in union with the Divine and lets the different parts of his body work according to the Divine will impersonally.

**(14)24-25—Who is alike in pleasure and pain, self-abiding, regarding gold and mud and stone as of equal**

Faith is thus the basis of all our activities in this world. Faith in spiritual matters is still more important for in the first place spiritual matters are beyond the grasp of intellect and secondly right faith is essential to attain knowledge and liberation.

Faiths are of various kinds according to the nature of individuals. Satvic men have faith in the Divine. Rajasic in deities which are supposed to grant worldly desires and Tamasic have faith in ghosts and spirits. The Asuras or the men of strong Rajasic temper have faith in violent austerities.

But faith in deities for the fulfilment of desires deprives men of real knowledge. Those who have no faith are always in doubt and so are incapable of doing anything. Right faith is essential for spiritual knowledge. But we can not have right faith unless we have control over our mind and senses for otherwise we will be led to worship deities for the fulfilment of our desires.

It should however be remembered that whatever our faith be reward for our work is given by the Divine. The deities, ghosts or spirits are only the product of man's imagination. There is no reality about them. The Divine has however so ordained that in whatever form we have faith to that we attain. If we worship the Divine we go to the Divine. If we worship a deity we go to that imaginary deity. If we worship ghosts we go to the ghosts.

The reward of our spiritual efforts is met with after one or several lives but the reward of works in the physical world is attained very quickly. If we plan out and build a

house, we can complete it in a few months, but our liberation needs the continuous efforts of several lives.

There is another characteristic of faith. Whatever our faith, it becomes firmer and firmer, for whatever we pray for with faith, the Divine grants that prayer. Even if we pray for a thing which is considered against the rules of morality or the prevalent rules of conduct, our prayer is granted, provided it is made with faith. Just as a father gives to his child the toy, it asks for, and a story book to him when he grows older, similarly the Divine Father hears all our prayers provided they are made with faith. But if we pray for things of the world, or of sensual desires, our progress is retarded, and we are sent to this reformatory of the world over and over again. It is therefore essential to have the right faith to attain our goal at the earliest.

### 1. A man is what his faith is.

**(17)3—The faith of every man is according to his natural disposition. Man consists of the faith. What his faith is, that verily he is.**

Our natural disposition and all the circumstances of our birth are the results of the prevailing beliefs or faith at the time of last death. Again our thoughts and actions in this life are determined by our faith, and the aggregate of our thoughts and actions make our character, or what we are at present.

But although faith plays such an important part in the making of a man and of his character, it is not something permanent and unchanging. Faith like other elements

of Prakriti is changeable and as the succeeding verses show faith can be divided into several classes. But as indicated later there are some factors which tend to make our faith firmer and firmer. It is therefore essential to have the right faith for without it we can not attain knowledge and liberation.

In order to have right faith we should read or listen to the teachings of the Gita with concentration, understand the Reality and the truths as described in the Gita.

## **2 Worldly desires lead to worship of deities and deprive men of knowledge**

(7)20—Men are led away by worldly desires which deprive them of real knowledge, they resort to other godheads and set up this or that rule, led by their own natures.

Men are generally of Rajasic nature. The object of their worship is to obtain wealth or offspring. They set up a goddess of wealth or a goddess of offspring and worship them in the hope that these deities will give them wealth or offspring. This worldly desire deprives them of Real knowledge. In order therefore to have right faith, we should control our desires which as will be seen later veil up real knowledge.

[ See verses (3) 36-43 under chapter X,3 ]

## **3 Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic Faiths**

(17)2—The faith in embodied beings is of three kinds according to their nature—Satvic, Rajasic & Tamasic. Hear thou of these

**(17)4—Satvic men worship the gods, Rajasic worship the yakshas ( the keepers of wealth ) and Tamasic, the spirits and the ghosts.**

The Satvic worship the gods or spiritual powers of the Divine, or the Divine in His distinct powers. The Rajasic worship powers that are supposed to grant worldly blessings. The Tamasic worship spirits and ghosts.

#### **4. Faith of the Asuras.**

**(17)5.6—The men who perform violent austerities contrary to the Shastras (Scriptures) with ostentation and egotism impelled by force of their desires and passions, torture, foolish as they are, all the organs of the body and Me, dwelling in the body within ; know them to be Asuras in their resolves.**

They Asuras are men of very strong Rajasic natures. They can be seen performing violent austerities, in religious festivals. They lie on pointed nails, hang themselves upside down from the branches of trees, or sit within a circle of burning wood and so forth. Such persons are a class in themselves distinct from the three classes described above.

#### **5. Want of faith leads to perdition.**

**(4)40—The ignorant, who has no faith, who is of doubting nature, goes to perdition. For the doubting soul, there is neither this world, nor the next, nor happiness.**

Faith is essential, in order that we may do anything properly, whether worldly or spiritual. Men of no faith

always remain in doubt and are incapable of doing anything

## 6. Faith is necessary for Self-realisation.

(9)3—Man who fails to have faith in higher truth, returns to the path of mortal living ( the cycle of birth and death ).

(3)31-32—Those who have faith and constantly follow this teaching of Mine, without caviling, they too are freed from ( the bondage of ) works. But those who find fault with My teaching and do not act upon it, know them to be of unripe mind, deluded in all knowledge and fated to be destroyed

(4)39—He who has faith and is devoted has controlled his mind and senses attains to knowledge. Having attained to knowledge, he goes swiftly to the Supreme peace.

It is necessary to have faith as well as self-control in order to attain knowledge. Those who have no control over their mind and senses let the mind and senses have their way and set up deities which they worship for the fulfilment of desires. This deprives them of the real knowledge.

## 7. God awards worship according to one's faith.

(7)22—Endowed with that faith, he worships that form ( of deity ) and from it he obtains his desires. It is I Myself Who ( in that form ) give him fruits.



(9)23—Even those who are devotees of other gods, worship them with faith, they also sacrifice to Me, though not according to true law.

(9)24—It is I who am the Enjoyer and Lord of all sacrifices ; but these men know not My true nature and hence they fall.

(7)23—But temporary is the reward gained by these men of petty minds. To the gods, go the worshippers of gods, but My devotees come to Me.

(9)25—Worshippers of the gods, go to the gods ; worshippers of ancestors, go to ancestors ; worshippers of the Spirits, go to the Spirits ; but My worshippers, come to Me.

There are no gods goddesses or idols. We invent them in order to fulfil our desires. The Divine is the only Reality in the world. He hears all our prayers and rewards them according to our faith. Those who pray to gods, go to the gods ; those who pray to Spirits, go to the Spirits, those who worship the Divine, go to the Divine.

**8. Fruit of works in the world are received quickly.**

(4)12—Those who desire the fulfilment of their works on earth, offer sacrifices to the gods, for the fruit of works in this world of men is very quick.

It is easy to grasp physical laws and work accordingly for the fulfilment of our worldly gains. Therefore the works in this world yield fruits quickly. But it is much more difficult to grasp the laws of Self-realisation, for

spiritual truths can not be grasped by human intellect It is therefore necessary to have the right faith in spiritual matters

**9. Our faith is made firm by the Divine.**

**(7)21—Whatever form of Me a devotee with faith wishes to worship, I make that faith of his undeviating**

Whatever the faith of a man it has a tendency to become firmer and firmer The reason for this is that the Divine accepts the prayer offered with faith whatever it may be Even the prayer of a robber who prays with faith is granted by the Divine The result of a right or wrong faith is met in the next life for whatever our faith that we become It is therefore all the more necessary to have right faith

**10. The Divine accepts the prayer of all, offered with faith.**

**(4)11—As men approach Me, so I accept them; Men follow in every way My path**

Every aspirant gets the fruits of his worship, provided it is done with faith Human beings have faith according to their own particular dispositions Everyone however is at his own stage of evolution and all are destined to attain liberation sooner or later One who worships the goddess of strength in order that he may be successful in robbery is like a misguided child and has to come to the reformatory of the world over and over again in order to be reformed A saint however is much more advanced and

nearer the goal. But all of us have to undergo our training in this world, gain experience, and to gradually gain knowledge little by little. Just as we do not snub a child who asks for a toy or a boy who wants something for play, similarly the Divine Father does not refuse anything to anybody provided he prays for it with faith. People are at different stages of evolution and every one acts according to the stage in which he is. Every one will, in his own course of time, attain to liberation. Just as in one's life, a man is at different stages as a baby, child, adolescent, youth and an old man, similarly a man in different lives is at different stages of evolution, tending gradually to progress towards liberation.

## CHAPTER X

### Svabhava and Svadharma

We have seen that an individual soul is a becoming of the Divine Shakti (Para Prakriti) or that the Infinite Timeless Spaceless Divine manifests Himself as multiple souls in finite bodies. Each embodied soul has therefore to regard all others as distinct and separate from itself. Each has to satisfy its needs for the maintenance and growth of its body and has to obtain materials for its mental and spiritual development out of the total of the world body and from common mental and spiritual planes. As all embodied souls are manifestations of the One there must be harmony and order between the various existences in the world. This can be possible only if each and every soul is assigned definite spiritual powers or qualities distinct from others so that each in its own characteristic way, may contribute to the welfare and well being of others or supplement that which the others lack so that the whole world may live harmoniously in one brotherhood. The All-wisdom of the One Infinite Being has assigned definite spiritual powers and qualities to every individual on this basis out of His infinite number of qualities comprised in His mad bhava. The spiritual powers and qualities with

which an individual soul is endowed with are called his Svabhava

But in this world, we do not find that harmony and order, which one would expect from the above considerations. This is because the spiritual powers and qualities of an individual have to be translated through the elements of Lower Prakriti of the three gunas, before these can be brought into action. Each and every element of Lower Prakriti, comprising buddhi, ego, mind, senses, tanmatras and their evolutes forming the body, has the three qualities of Satva, Rajas and Tamas in more or less proportions. All of us are at different stages of evolution. In some people Tamas predominates, in others Rajas, while very few have reached the Satvic stage. It is only when we are in the Satvic stage that our Svabhava is faithfully reproduced in the form of our thoughts and actions. Before that stage is reached, our actions are distortions of the truths of Svabhava, the extent of distortion depending upon the proportion of the lower gunas in our minds, lives and bodies. This distortion of the Svabhava is called Bhava. Thus the two powers of the Divine, Para Prakriti and Apra Prakriti, form the links between the three Bhavas; Para Prakriti between Mad-bhava and Svabhava and Apra Prakriti between Svabhava and Bhava. Our aim should be first to attain to Svabhava and then to Mad-bhava.

It is therefore only when we reach the Satvic stage that our actions can be called right or faithful reproductions of our Svabhava. But as the three gunas are always present in all the elements of Lower Prakriti, even when

the Satva predominates we may have occasions when the Rajas and Tamas may assert themselves. We must therefore transcend the gunas and be in Yoga with the Divine. Our false ego will then have to be given up, our actions will become desireless and impersonal and consequently we shall be doing all actions according to the Divine Will. This is the culmination of right actions.

The Gita has dealt with the subject of Svabhava under three different aspects

- I The nature of the Svabhava
- II Svabhava as the basis of action
- III Svabhava as the basis of social order

## **I The Nature of Svabhava**

The Gita gives a few examples of the nature of Svabhava or spiritual principles in different elements of Prakriti. These examples can be multiplied by anyone who may ponder over the subject.

The primordial elements ether, air, fire, water and earth are responsible for our senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell respectively. Therefore Svabhava of ether is sound, of air touch, of fire sight, of water taste and of earth smell.

The syllable OM is the basis of sounds and speech out of which all other words of sound and speech have developed. The syllable OM is therefore the Svabhava of the Vedas which comprise knowledge of sound and speech.

As Svabhava represents the spiritual principle of an existence, Manhood is the Svabhava of Man, Life of all Existences, Austerity of an Ascetic, Intelligence of the Intelligent, Energy of the Energetic and Strength of the Strong.

(7)8—I ( Purushotama ) am the taste in water ; I am the light in the Moon and the Sun ; I am the pranava ( syllable OM ) in all the Vedas ; I am sound in ether and manhood in men.

(7)9—I am the pure scent in earth, light in fire ; I am life in all existences and the austerity in ascetics.

(7)10—Know Me as the eternal seed of all existences. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the energy of the energetic.

(7)11—I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire and passion. I am in beings "desire" which is not contrary to Dharma.

Svabhava is the spiritual principle or the Divine Himself.

The last verse states the distinction between svabhava and bhava. Desire and passions are the Rajasic qualities of the Lower Prakriti and distort the svabhava "strength" of the "strong". Strength in its spiritual aspect is the svabhava of the strong and not as distorted by the rajasic qualities of the Lower Prakriti, into actions in the world.

By "desire" is meant, not the desire for things of the Lower Prakriti, but desire for the Divine. According to

the Gita's definition Dharma means actions done according to Svabhava. Therefore desire which is not contrary to Dharma, is according to Svabhava. This desire the Gita says is spiritual.

## **II Svabhava as the basis of action**

1 One is guided by his Svabhava in his actions

**(3)33—All existences follow their nature. What can coercing it avail? Even the man of knowledge does according to his nature**

By nature is meant the Svabhava. It is not possible to force one not to follow his svabhava. Even those who have spiritual knowledge act only according to their svabhava for the path of one's perfection lies in acting on the lines of his svabhava. A household woman attends to her household duties a butcher does his work a ruler looks to the interests of his subjects. Everyone of them can attain perfection and liberation by doing his or her duties faithfully as dictated by their respective svabhavas.

**(18)59—If abiding in egoism, thou thinkest "I will not fight", vain is then thy resolve. Thy nature will appoint thee to thy work**

Arjuna being overpowered by feelings of compassion for his relatives friends and teachers in the enemy's camp had refused to fight. The teacher says that his svabhava would compel him to fight.

**(18)60—What from delusion thou wishest not to do,**



that thou shalt do inspite of thyself, bound by thy own work born of thy Svabhava.

Arjuna had resolved not to fight as a result of delusion brought about by the ignorance of his rajasic nature, but the principle of his svabhava as a fighter must assert itself and compel him to fight

**(18)61—The Lord abides in the hearts of beings, turning all beings as if mounted on a machine by his Maya.**

As we have seen, both the Jiva and Prakriti are Divine Powers. It is the Divine Maya ( Power by which the One Infinite Being assumes the form of multiple finite beings ) by which we cannot see Him who abides in our hearts and does all works. It is He, the One that does everything. The Teacher being an Avtar knew that it was the Divine Will that the battle should take place and Arjuna take part in it, but Arjuna being still subject to the ignorance of Lower Prakriti could not perceive the Will of the Divine

This leads us to the much-debated question, whether everything is pre-determined or we have freedom of action. Looked at from the spiritual point of view, all works that a man does are pre-determined. One does works according to his Svabhava, but in this physical world, the Svabhava has to be translated into actions through the elements of Prakriti i.e. the Buddhi, Mind, Senses etc. Each of these elements has the 3 gunas in varying proportions. The proportion of the gunas depends on the stage of one's evolution. The more advanced one is in evolution, the greater the proportion of the Satvic guna. One's actions are

therefore pre determined by his svabhava and by the stage of his evolution or is pre determined But the spiritual point of view is beyond our orbit of understanding We have to look at things from the mental point of view

Looked at from the human or mental point of view however every one has freedom of action We are from birth placed under certain circumstances depending on our actions in previous lives but can by the various methods prescribed in the Gita raise our buddhi to the Satvic stage and then transcend the gunas and become the Trigunitita We should therefore exert our utmost in order to mould our thought and actions on these principles It however the result is not according to our desires it is because our powers are strictly limited and we can not foresee all the circumstances of a case We should therefore not hanker after the result and leave it in the hands of God This is the Naish karmya way of doing works as preached in Chapter XVII

2 One's Svabhava is his Svadharma

(18)47—Better is one's own law of works though imperfectly carried out than the law of another perfectly carried out One does not incur sin when one acts in agreement with the law of one's own svabhava

(18)48—One should not relinquish the work to which one is born ( as provided by the svabhava ) All actions ( in the three gunas of Lower Prakriti ) indeed are enveloped by defects, as fire is by smoke

( 3 )35—Better is one's law of works Svadharma

though imperfectly carried out. Better is death in ( the fulfilment of ) one's own law, for to follow another's law is perilous.

If we adopt the Svabhava of another, and even though we may do some works under it more perfectly than we do, acting on our own Svabhava, our progress towards perfection and liberation will be retarded. The very fact that we have been given certain special spiritual qualities and powers, means that God wants us to work according to them in this world. If an individual works according to one's own Svabhava, it will lead not only to harmony and efficiency in this world but it is the way in which God intended that we should attain perfection and liberation. As it is God's intention that we should work according to our Svabhava, it is our duty to do so and even if we have to do violent actions such as fighting the battle of Kurukshetra, following our Law of Svabhava, it cannot be called sin. Even if we meet death while acting on the principles of our Svabhava, we should not hesitate in doing our duty, for it is only by following this path that we can reach our goal. We will start the next life from the point we had left and thus our progress towards perfection will not be hampered.

Our only enemies in the path of our duty are the rajasic or tamasic gunas, the elements of Lower Prakriti, through which our spiritual svabhava is translated into action in this world. This point is made clear in the verses that follow.

3 Rajasic desires distort Svabhava or veil up knowledge.

(3)34—Liking and disliking of the senses for their

respective objects are natural ; fall not under their sway for these are his ( the seeker of the truth ) foes

(3)36—Arjuna said “But ( if we should follow our nature ), by what is a man impelled to commit sin even against his will ?”.

(3)37—The Blessed Lord said : This is desire, this is wrath, born of the Rajasic guna, all devouring and most sinful ; know this to be the enemy here ( in this world )

It is desire a thing of Lower Prakriti in which Rajas guna predominates that impells us to sin or which distorts our Svabhava. The teacher wants us to act according to Svabhava our spiritual power and qualities. But we can *faithfully carry out this behest only if, buddhi mind* senses and body be Satvic so that the spiritual qualities be faithfully translated into action in this world because all actions have to be done through the elements of Prakriti

(3)38—As fire is covered by smoke, as a mirror by dust, as an embryo is wrapped up by the womb, so is this ( knowledge ) covered by that ( desire, wrath and passions )

(3)39—Covered is knowledge by this eternal foe of knowledge, by this insatiable fire of desire.

Desires are insatiable for the more are our desires satisfied the greater is the number of fresh desires that crop up. The desire covers knowledge for we have the knowledge of its being our enemy even when we are under

the sway of desire. Again desire means attachment to objects of sense, which is the opposite of what should be to gain spiritual knowledge i.e. unattachment, impersonality and equal mindedness

(3)40—The senses, the mind and the buddhi are its seat, veiling wisdom by these, it deludes the embodied soul.

(3)41—Therefore at the outset, control thou the senses and slay the sinful destroyer of knowledge and discrimination.

(3)42—The senses are supreme (beyond the sense objects), supreme is the mind over the senses, supreme is the buddhi over the mind; that which is supreme over the buddhi (intelligence and will) is He, the Immutable Spirit.

We must proceed step by step, first control the senses, then develop the mind and the buddhi in the Satvic quality. Last is the Immutable Purusha. It is by Yoga with this Immutable Purusha, a power of the higher order than the elements of Prakriti, that complete control of the senses and the Satvic condition of the mind and buddhi can be attained.

(3)43—Thus knowing Him (the Immutable Purusha) Who is beyond the buddhi, steady the lower (Self) by the (higher) Self, slay him, this enemy in the form of desire, so hard to seize.

(16)21—Three-fold are the doors of Hell, destructive

of the soul—desire, wrath, and greed, therefore man should cast away these

(16)22—A man liberated from these doors of darkness, follows his own higher good and arrives at the highest soul status

4 Perfection attained by following one's svabhava

(18)45—Devoted each to his own natural work, men attain perfection. How one, devoted to his own work, attains perfection, that hear thou from Me

(18)46—He from whom all beings originate and by whom all this universe is pervaded through the performance of his own work, man attains perfection.

This verse gives the substance of the whole teaching of the Gita. The Divine has created the universe. He manifests Himself in the form of multiple beings. As He is the One, He has assigned definite qualities (svabhava) to every individual being so that all may live harmoniously together in their separate and finite existences. We can however act faithfully according to the svabhava if we have control over our senses and our buddhi and mind are made Satvic. The path to our perfection lies in faithfully acting according to our Svabhava. It is sin to follow another path and if we do so our progress will be retarded. In realising this and in pursuing the Divine purpose lies our progress, perfection and liberation.

### III Svabhava as the basis of Social order

(4)13—The fourfold order was created by Me according to the divisions of guna and karma. Though I am the author of it, know Me, Immutable and Non-doer,

(18)41—The works of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and also of Sudras are distributed according to the qualities born of their Svabhava.

(18)42—Serenity, self-control, austerity, purity, forbearance and also uprightness, knowledge, inner-realisation, faith in the Divine ; these are duties of a Brahmin, born of his svabhava.

(18)43 Heroism, courage, steadiness, resourcefulness and also not fleeing from battle, generosity and leadership are the duties of a Kshatriya, born of his svabhava.

(18)44—Agriculture, tending cattle and trade are the duties of a Vaishya, born of his svabhava ; work of the character of service is the duty of a Sudra, born of his svabhava.

Broadly speaking human beings can be divided into four classes according to svabhava or aptitude 1 Scholar and teacher, 2 Administrator and warrior, 3 Businessman, 4 Manual worker. In all societies we meet with these four classes of people. The principle which the Gita advocates for adopting anyone of these professions is his aptitude as determined by his svabhava. In ancient India, the selection of one of these professions was based on svabhava. As time went on, birth became the only criterion of the profession. The son of a Brahmin came to be known as a-Brahmin and so forth. Gradually the Brahmins

monopolised all learning the Kshatriyas the administration and army the Vaishvas business and the Sudras were forced to do manual work and were debarred from all the other three professions. The Brahmins by the privileges of their profession introduced customs which gave them easy means of livelihood and special prestige. The four professions thus degenerated into rigid castes.

The caste system is contrary to the basic teachings of the Gita. It violates the principle of brotherhood of man and is directly opposed to the principle that a man's profession or work should be according to his svabhava. No wonder that a system worked on the principles opposed to the basic teachings of the Gita resulted in inefficiency disharmony between different peoples and foreign rule.

If all the sons of a father inherited the aptitudes or Svabhava of the father there could be a justification of caste system. But this is not the case. I am an Engineer and I find that only one of my sons has the aptitude to become an Engineer. One is a doctor another a military officer and the third an administrative officer all having selected their professions according to their special aptitudes.

We should not imagine that there can be only four professions for human beings and no more. In the simple society that existed at the time of the Gita the fourfold order based on the principle of Svabhava was sufficient for the needs of those times. Things are quite different now. The advance of scientific knowledge and inventions and also of the several branches of art science and industry have



opened out new vistas for human effort. Each one of the numerous branches of organizations which have sprung from them requires specialised knowledge. Thus the number of professions are not four but several thousands, calling for the exercise of the several innate qualities which had so far remained latent in man. The only practical method open to us for selection to these numerous professions is to test the aptitude of a boy by the modern methods of psycho-analysis and give him the training for which he is best fitted by nature. Every one of us should perform his duty in the profession in which he is placed, to the best of his ability and consider it his svadharma. That way lies our perfection and liberation and also efficiency and harmony of the human society as a whole.

The Vedic sacrifices introduced about six thousand years ago were meant to convey spiritual truths in the form of rites and ceremonies. This symbolic way of describing the truths of the Divine is peculiar to the times of the Vedas. Later, as language developed, the spiritual truths were described in several systems of philosophy. By the time, the Gita was written, there existed several systems of highly developed philosophy. The Vedic sacrifices, however, continued to be performed but their inner meaning was forgotten. The Gita while sticking to the description of the Vedic sacrifices, draws out their inner meaning and describes them in a language, which in the context of other verses on the subject, leave no doubt of the real intention of the Gita. The word Sacrifice is used to mean all works done for the good of others or for obtaining gifts by working for them.

The main principle set forth in the Gita is that Sacrifice is a law of the world. We have to be clear in our minds as to why this is so, what is its significance and how by consciously acting upon this principle, we can attain liberation even in this life.

We have seen that it is the Divine, Who manifests Himself in the form of multiple embodied souls, physically separate and distinct from one another. Out of His infinite Divine powers and qualities—*mad-bhava*, He has allotted to every one of us, some distinct spiritual powers and qualities—*svabhava*, which the others lack. He has also provided adequate equipment in the form of physical build and mental traits to utilize those powers and thus serve others with zest, attachment or love. An individual feels pleasure

in his own special function although it may seem very irksome and hazardous to others. This mutual exchange of services is essential for our existence, our physical and mental development and leads to peace, harmony and maximum efficiency in this family of the world.

We find this system of exchange at work between the members of a species, between the different species and also within the body of a living being. Let us take the example of a human body. Our body is made up of various species of living cells. When a wound is being healed we notice that minute particles of flesh called cells form one by one and join up with others to fill up the gap of the wound. Every one of these cells is a living being which if separated and supplied with proper nourishment under proper environments can live for several years. There are several hundred species of cells and several millions of one species in the body. Every one of these cells performs its special functions and draws its own nourishment from cells whose function it is to produce it. It is by this give and take or mutual co-operation that life in the body is maintained in perfect health. If for some reason some cells cease to perform their functions they are eliminated. The fighter cells fight all aggressors with their whole strength and die in their millions defending the body. This goes on till we by our own neglect make some kinds of cells too weak to perform their functions or when an aggressor is too strong for them. The body then becomes diseased or dies.

The same co-operation and harmony should exist between millions of men inhabiting this world or between human beings and other species of the world. But we find

that this is not the case. The reason is that while the cells do their work instinctively, human beings are given freedom of will. Desire for sensual objects is too strong for most people, to perform their functions faithfully according to their *svabhava*. Dominated by the *rajasic* quality, we want to get as much as we can at the expense of others. We want to amass wealth without giving anything in return. We take undue advantage of the freedom of will given to man for his spiritual progress. We forget that it is the *Prakriti*, a power of the Divine, which is responsible for the activities of all the elements of our body. The *Prakriti* works according to the stage of development reached by the elements of the body, in their evolution. It carries out the will of the Divine and does not yield to our desires. If we violate the principle of exchange or sacrifice, we have to suffer for it.

This mutual exchange is going on not only between the different individuals of the world but also between the members of this world and the world of gods i.e. between us and the divine powers responsible for carrying out the will of the Divine. We have to work or perform some sacrifice in order to get some divine gift. We must properly remove weeds from the soil, plough, manure and irrigate it, put in good seeds before we can expect the gift of crops from the gods. We must control rivers, dig out canals, before we can irrigate our fields. We must resort to afforestation before we can expect the gift of rain.

But if we realize that this law of sacrifice is not only inevitable, but also useful to our peace and prosperity, we should be doing our duty cheerfully. A man of some

knowledge knows that the more efficiently we perform our duties the more rapid will be our progress towards perfection. The more we serve others the more do we prepare ourselves for the surrender of this apparent self to the Divine the greater is our knowledge. A man of knowledge realises the relative values of the apparent self and of the Divine. He knows that the former is of limited knowledge subject to the vagaries of Rajasic mind to all the accidents of mortal existence and to the unending cycles of birth and death. On the other hand is the Divine Eternal Immutable All Pervading Self Conscious and full of Self-Delight. This knowledge makes the man of knowledge to surrender his apparent self or sacrifice it at the altar of the Divine and in exchange he attains the Divine Status for it is only by surrendering our apparent self that we can attain it. This is the culmination of conscious sacrifice.

### 1 Sacrifice as the law of the world

(3)10—In ancient times the Lord of creatures, created men with the principle of sacrifice and said By this shall you multiply, this shall be the Kamadhuk milch cow of your desires.

Kama dhuk is the mystical cow of the god Indra which gives us all that we may desire.

(3)11—By this foster the gods and let the gods foster you, thus fostering one another, you shall attain to the supreme good.

112—Fostered by sacrifice, the gods will give you

the desired enjoyments. He who enjoys their gifts, without giving to them, is verily a thief.

There is a principle of give and take or exchange in the world. Unless we sacrifice one thing, we cannot get the thing we want. Similar exchange goes on between the material world and the spiritual world (of gods representing spiritual powers of the Divine). Sacrifice by works pleases the gods, who in lieu give us the gifts of rain and food.

If we enjoy their gifts and do not give anything in return, it means that we possess things which are not ours by right or that we steal things.

(3)13—The good who eat what is left from sacrifice are released from all sins, but they who cook food only for themselves, evil are they; they eat sin.

Sacrifice leads to liberation, but those who do not act upon this principle commit sin, for they violate the basic law of the world.

(3)14—From food creatures come into being; from rain, food is produced; from sacrifice arises rain and sacrifice is born of karma (actions).

(3)15—Know karma to be born of Prakriti, and Prakriti is born of the Immutable Brahman; therefore the All-Pervading Immutable Brahman is established in the sacrifice.

(3)16—He who follows not the wheel thus set in movement, evil is his being, sensual is his delight; that man lives in vain.

The above chain of cause and effect shows that the Divine is present in all sacrifices. Anyone who breaks this chain is punished for it. Such a man does not understand the purpose of existence which is liberation of the soul from Prakriti. It is only by sacrifice that we gain perfection and liberation. He who does not act upon this principle lives in vain for one cannot achieve the purpose of his existence through selfishness and aggrandizement.

It should be remembered that the word Sacrifice is used in the general sense of all works done for the good of others or doing works according to our Svabhava.

## 2. Different kinds of Sacrifice.

(1) The Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic sacrifices

(17)11—That sacrifice which is offered by men without desire for personal fruit, according to the right principles, with mind fixed on the sacrifice only, is Satvic.

(17)12—That which is performed in expectation of reward or for the sake of ostentation, know it to be Rajasic.

(17)13—The sacrifice which is not done according to right principles, in which no food is distributed, without the hymns, without gifts which is empty of faith, is said to be Tamasic.

The Satvic sacrifice is the ideal, only short of that done by a liberated man who is in union with the Divine who does every work according to the Divine Will.

A Sarvic sacrifice is done without any desire for reward, impersonally, with concentration on the work in hand and according to right principles.

It is the custom among Hindus to chant hymns at the time of sacrifice, dedicating all works to the Divine. It is also the custom to distribute food as a sign of fruitful help to others.

The sacrifice of the Gita is not the ceremonial Vedic sacrifice. All works done in the spirit of sacrifice or works dedicated to the Divine come under the term Sacrifice.

#### (11) Vedic Sacrifices

The Vedas prescribe special rituals for the fulfilment of our various desires. For instance, if we want offspring, we have to perform certain prescribed rites; if we want wealth, we have to perform another set of rites, and so on. They cannot be called sacrifices in the sense, the Gita advocates sacrifice and so the Gita condemns such sacrifices.

(2)42-44—The intelligence of those is not established in the Self with concentrated fixity who are attached to pleasure and power and whose discrimination is stolen away by the flowery words of the unwise, who are full of desires and look upon Heaven as their goal and who take pleasure in the letter of the Vedas, declare that there is nothing else. They rejoice at the various special rituals as the means of pleasure and power which are the causes of new births as the fruit of actions.



(2)46—To a Brahmin who has the knowledge ( spiritual knowledge ), all the Vedas are of as much use as is a well in a place under flood everywhere.

Even if the Vedavins worship God, they do so with a desire to go to Heaven. They do attain Heaven but only for a time and again return to earth. They are not liberated like a man of knowledge who performs actions desirelessly, impersonally and is equal-minded.

To a man of knowledge all that is written in the Vedas is as useless as the water of well in a place which is under flood.

(9)20—The knowers of the three Vedas, worshipping Me by Vedic rituals drinking the soma wine purifying themselves from sin, pray for Me the way to heaven; they enjoy in heaven the Divine pleasures of the gods.

(9)21—Having enjoyed the heavenly worlds of vast pleasure, return to mortal existence on the exhaustion of their merit; thus abiding the injunctions of the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they follow the cycles of birth and death.

The ancient Vedic ritualists drank the wine of communion with the gods; they performed good deeds and performed sacrifices with a view to attain heaven. This they did attain, but only for a time.

(iii) Sacrifices for attaining Self-Control

(4)26—Some offer (a) hearing and other senses into

the fires of control, others offer (b) sound and other objects of senses in the fires of the senses.

(4)27—Some again offer (c) all the actions of the senses and the works of the vital force into the fire of the Yoga of self control, kindled by knowledge.

These are various ways of sacrifice and of offering

- (a) Offerings are the senses and way of sacrifice is self control i.e. senses are controlled by the mind. This indicates that the man is rajasic and his senses are to be controlled by the mind.
- (b) Offerings are sense objects and the way of sacrifice is fire of senses i.e. the objects are received by sense-perceptions, without the mind being disturbed by sense activities the senses themselves becoming fires of sacrifice. This indicates that the man is at the Satvic stage.
- (c) Offerings are sense activities or vital activities and the way of sacrifice is yoga of self-control kindled by knowledge. When knowledge is gained, all the activities of the senses or of the vital are received in the calm, immutable and eternal soul i.e. works are done impersonally, without attachment. This is the stage when the Self is in union with the Self of others and with the Divine.

(4)29—Others again who are devoted to the controlling of breath, having restrained the Prana (the outgoing breath) and Apana (the incoming breath),

**pour as sacrifice, Prana into Apana and Apana into Prana.**

This refers to the Purak and Rechak breathing exercises of Pranayama

**(4)30—While others having controlled their food, pour as sacrifice, their life-breaths with life-breaths. All these are knowers of sacrifice; by sacrifice have destroyed their sins**

This refers to Kumbhak breathing exercise of Pranayama. All these exercises lead to self control and thus to knowledge, which destroys sins. By knowledge is here meant the realisation of the unity of the Self with all beings and with the Divine. Such a man is liberated from bondage with Prakriti and thus sin or virtue, the dualities of Prakriti are washed away from the liberated soul.

(iv) Sacrifice of wealth, learning & austerities

**(4)28—Some again offer as sacrifice, their material possessions, their austerities or their spiritual exercises, while others of self restraint and rigid vows offer their learning and knowledge as sacrifice.**

**3. Conscious Sacrifice leads to knowledge & Liberation**

**(4)31—Those who enjoy the nectar of food left over from sacrifice attain to the Eternal Brahman. This world is not for him who offers no sacrifice, how then any other world.**

Those who act upon the Law of Sacrifice attain to knowledge and union with the Divine.

Those who do not follow this law, can not live peacefully and happily in this world. Prakriti punishes them for the violation of this basic Divine Law. When this world of dualities, of pleasure and pain and of all the accidents of life, is not meant for such a person, how can he deserve higher worlds.

(4)32—Thus all these and many other forms of sacrifice have been spread out in the mouth of Brahman (i.e. as the means of attaining the Divine). Know that all these are born of work and so knowing thou shalt be free.

All kinds of sacrifice done through works lead to knowledge and to liberation of soul from the bondage of Prakriti.

(4)25—Some Yogins perform sacrifices to gods above while others offer sacrifice by the sacrifice itself into the fire of the Supreme.

Some conceive the Divine in the form of His various powers and seek Him by performing fixed rituals, by self-discipline and by consecrated works. Others who have knowledge, sacrifice all the activities of sacrifice to the Divine i.e. surrender all their works to the Divine.

(4)24—For him (the liberated man), the act of offering is God, the oblation is God. By realizing God in his works, he verily reaches God.

A man of knowledge sees God in all His manifestations. He sees Him even in all the forms and acts of Vedic rituals which in themselves can not help us towards spiritual progress. And if we regard the rituals from this point of view, we are led to attain knowledge.

#### **4. The method of Sacrifice.**

**(17)23—**The formula Om Tat, Sat is considered to be the threefold symbol of Brahman. By this were ordained of old the Brahmins, the Vedas and the Sacrifices.

OM is the symbol of Brahman. The letters A U, M stand for His manifestation in the gross body, subtle body and the spirit. The syllable as a whole represents the Superconscious state. Tat indicates That, the Absolute and Sat, the Reality.

**(17)24—**Therefore with the pronunciation of Om, the acts of Sacrifice, gifts and austerities as laid down in Scriptures are always undertaken by the knowers of the Brahman.

**(17)25—**With the pronunciation of Tat are performed the acts of Sacrifice, gifts and austerities, without desire of fruit, by the seekers of liberation.

**(17)26—**The word Sat means Good and Reality ; and so the word Sat is used for good actions.

**(17)27—**Steadfastness in sacrifice, gifts and austerities is also called Sat and so any work for such purpose is called Sat.

(17)28—Whatever offering or gift is made, whatever austerities are performed, whatever rite is observed without faith, it is called Ast. It is nothing, here or hereafter.

## CHAPTER XII

### *Arjuna's Vision of the Divine*

*The vision of the Divine as described in the eleventh chapter of the Gita is a piece of beautiful poetry vividly portraying the Divine in His mutable aspect and giving a vivid picture of His omnipresence and power*

Arjuna requests Lord Sri Krishna to show him His Divine Form. Lord Sri Krishna accedes to his request and gives him Spiritual eye as the Divine can not be seen with human eyes. As throughout the Gita Sanjaya sees and hears by his supernatural powers what passes between Arjuna and Lord Sri Krishna and relates it to the blind King Dhritrashtra of the Kurus.

Arjuna first sees the Divine crowned with mace and discus emblems of divinity and intense light emanating from Him. He has infinite number of faces, eyes and other limbs, dressed in innumerable raiments, garlands and with several kinds of weapons. The whole world is resting in Him and He pervades the whole universe. All the gods and saints stand gazing at Him with awe and adoration. Arjuna realizes that the Divine is Eternal and the Infinite, the Refuge of all, Guardian of all laws and the Supreme Purusha.

He then sees Him in the aspect of Time-Spirit and Destroyer of the worlds. The Divine has innumerable mouths with tusks of destruction, faces like fires of death and Arjuna is terrified. All the sons of Dhritrashtra and many warriors on both sides of the battle-field are seen rushing into His mouth and being crushed to powder. Lord Sri Krishna tells him that all these warriors have been pre-ordained to be slain. He wants Arjuna to join the battle to win victory, fame and kingdom which have been pre-ordained for him.

Arjuna is full of awe and adoration and asks pardon for whatever he may have said to Lord Sri Krishna so far, not having known of his Divinity. He wants to be treated like a son, a friend or as a beloved. His heart is shaken with fear and he wants to see His previous form of splendour with mace and discus.

Lord Sri Krishna, by His grace, shows him His previous form and Arjuna now shakes off his fear. The Lord tells him that this Divine Form, which he has seen, can not be seen by learning, austerities or gifts but only by intense devotion.

(11)1—Arjuna said ! This word of the profound spiritual secret that Thou hast given me, out of grace for me; by this my delusion is gone.

(11)2—The birth and passing away of things have been heard by me in detail from Thee, and also of Thy imperishable greatness.



(11)3—So it is as Thou hast declared Thyself ; I desire to see Thy Divine form and body.

(11)4—If Thou thinkest that it can be seen by me, then show me Thy Imperishable Self.

(11)5—The Blessed Lord said : Behold My hundreds and thousands of Divine forms, various in kind various in shape and hue.

(11)6—Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Asvins and also the Maruts. Behold many wonders never seen before.

(11)7—Here today, behold the whole world, with all that is moving and unmoving, centred in the One, and whatever else thou wilt to see.

(11)8—But thou canst not see Me with these eyes of thine. I give thee, the supernatural eye. Behold Me in My divine power.

(11)9-14—Sanjay said : Having spoken, O King ! Hari, the great Lord of Yoga, then revealed to Arjuna His Supreme and Divine form, of numerous mouths and eyes, of many visions of wonder, with numerous celestial armaments, of many Divine weapons uplifted, wearing Divine garlands and raiments, with Divine perfumes and ointments, the All-wonderful, Resplendent, Boundless, with face turned everywhere. Such is the splendour of this Exalted Being as if a thousand Suns had arisen at once. Arjuna beheld the whole world with its manifold divisions resting in the One

the body of the God of gods. Then he, struck with amazement, his hair standing on end, bowed down his head to the Lord, with hands folded.

(11)15—Arjuna said: I see all the gods in Thy body, and hosts of all grades of beings, Brahma the creating lord, seated on the Lotus throne and all the rishis and heavenly nagas.

(11)16—I see Thee, infinite in form, with numberless arms, bellies, faces and eyes, but I see not Thy end or Thy middle or Thy beginning, O Lord of the Universe! O Form Universal!

(11)17—I see Thee crowned and with Thy mace and Thy discus, hard to discern because Thou art a luminous man of energy on all sides of me, with the radiance of the flaming fire and Sun, incomparable.

(11)18—Thou art the Immutable, the Supreme, to be realised. Thou art the ultimate resting place of the world; Thou art the imperishable guardian of the external laws; Thou art the Primal Purusha, I think.

(11)19—I see Thee, without beginning, middle or end, of infinite power, of numberless arms, with the Moon and the Sun as Thine eyes. Thou hast a face of blazing fire and Thou art ever burning up the whole world with the flame of Thy energy.

(11)20—The whole space between the earth and heaven and all the quarters are pervaded by Thee

alone When this wondrous, terrible form of Thine is seen, the three worlds tremble.

(11)21—The hosts of gods enter Thee afraid, adoring, with folded hands; and the Rishis and the Siddhas (perfected men) cry: "May there be peace and weal," and praise Thee with many praises

(11)22—The Rudras, the Adityas, the Vasus, the Sadhyas, the Visvas, the two Aswins and the Maruts and the Ushmapas, the Gandharvas the Yakshas the Asuras the Siddhas, all have their eyes fixed on Thee in amazement

(11)23—Seeing Thy great form, of many mouths and eyes, of many arms, thighs and feet, of many bellies, terrible with many tusks the worlds tremble and so do I

(11)24—I see Thee touching heaven, blazing with many hues with the mouth opened wide, and large glaring eyes my inmost soul trembles in fear and I find no courage or peace

(11)25—When I see Thy mouths terrible with many tusks of destruction, Thy faces like the fires of Death and Time, I lose sense of direction and find no peace. Turn Thy heart to grace O God of gods, refuge of all the worlds

(11)26-27—The sons of Dhritrashtra, together with the multitude of kings and heroes, Bhishma and Drona and Rama, along with chief warriors on our

side too are rushing into Thy fearful mouths, set with terrible tusks. Some caught between the jaws are seen with their heads crushed to powder.

(11)28—As the speed of many rushing waters running towards the ocean, so do these heroes of the world of men are entering into Thy many mouths of flame

(11)29—As moths rush swiftly into a blazing fire only to perish, even so do these men rush into Thy mouth with great speed to their own destruction.

(11)30—Devouring all the worlds on every side with Thy flaming mouths, thou lickest them up, Thy fierce rays filling the whole world with the blaze, and scorch it with their fierce radiance.

(11)31—Tell me who Thou art with form so terrible. Salutation to Thee, O Thou great Godhead, turn thy heart to grace. I desire to know Thee, O Primeval One, for I know not Thy purpose.

(11)32—The Blessed Lord said: I am the Time Spirit, destroyer of the world, here made manifest for infolding the world. Even without thee, all these warriors shall be not, who are arrayed in the opposing armies.

(11)33—Therefore arise and get the glory, conquer Thy enemies and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. By Me verily, they have been already slain. Be thou merely the apparent cause.

(11)34—Slay Drona, Bhishma, Jayadharata, Karna and other great warriors as well. who are already

doomed by Me. Be not afraid. Fight, thou shalt conquer the adversary in the battle.

(11)35—Sanjaya said: Having heard this utterance of Krishna Arjuna, with folded hands and trembling, saluted again and spoke to Krishna in a faltering voice very much terrified and bowing down.

(11)36—Arjuna said: Rightly does the world rejoice and delight in glorifying Thee. The Rakshasas are fleeing in terror in all directions and all the hordes of Siddhas bow down before Thee in adoration.

(11)37—And why should they not do Thee homage, O Great-Souled one who are greater than Brahma, the original creator, O Infinite Being, O Lord of gods, Refuge of the universe? Thou art the immutable, the being and non-being and Thou art that which is the Supreme.

(11)38—Thou art the Ancient Purusha, the first and original God-head. Thou art the Supreme Refuge of this universe. Thou art the Knower and the One thing to be known. Thou art the Supreme goal. And by Thee is this universe pervaded, O Thou infinite in form!

(11)39—Thou art Vayu, Yama, Agni, Varuna, the Moon Prajapati, the grandsire of all. Hail, hail to Thee, a thousand times and again and again hail, hail to Thee.

(11)40—Hail to Thee in front, hail to Thee behind and hail to Thee on every side, for Thou art each and all

that is. Thou infinite in power and infinite in prowess, pervadest all and therefore Thou art all.

(11)41-42—For whatever I have spoken to Thee in rashness, thinking that Thou art my companion and unaware of Thy greatness, addressing as "O Krishna ! O Yadava ! O friend !" out of my negligence or in love And for whatsoever disrespect was shown to Thee in jest, while walking, reposing, sitting or at meals, when alone or in company, I implore Thee, the Immeasurable One to forgive all this.

(11)43—Thou art the father of all the world, moving and unmoving ; Thou art the object of worship and the most solemn object of veneration. None is equal to Thee. Who then can excel Thee in the three worlds, O Thou Power incomparable !

(11)44—Therefore bowing and prostrating my body before Thee, Adorable Lord. I seek Thy grace. Thou shouldst bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to his friend, as a lover to his beloved.

(11)45—I have seen what never was seen before and I rejoice, but my heart is shaken with fear. Show me O Godhead that other form of Thine, turn Thy heart to grace, O Thou Lord of gods ! O Thou abode of this universe !

(11)46—I wish to see Thee even as before, crowned and with Thy mace and discus. Assume that same four-armed form. O thousand-armed ! O Form universal !

(11)47—The Blessed Lord said: This that Thou seest by My favour through My Divine Power, O Arjuna! is My supreme Form, luminous, universal, infinite and primeval which none but thee hast seen before.

(11)48—Neither by the study of the Vedas and sacrifices, nor by gifts, nor by rituals, nor by severe austerities, this form of Mine can be seen by any other than thee.

(11)49—Be not afraid, not bewildered having seen this terrific form of Mine. Free from fear and glad at heart, behold again this other (former) form of Mine.

(11)50—Sanjaya said: Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Krishna revealed to him again His normal (Narayana) form. The Mahatma again assuming the desired form of grace comforted the terrified Arjuna.

(11)51—Arjuna said: Having seen this Thy gentle human form, my heart is composed and I am restored to my own normal nature.

(11)52-54—The Blessed Lord said: This form of Mine which is indeed very hard to see, thou hast seen. The gods are ever eager to see this form. I cannot be seen either by the Vedas or by austerities or by gifts or by sacrifice, but only by that Bhakti, which regards, adores and loves Me alone in all things. I can thus be known, truly seen and entered into

(11)55—He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, *free from attachment and without enmity to all existences*, he comes to Me.



## CHAPTER XIII

### Different Classes of People

The Gita divides human beings into 3 classes according to their stages of development. The division is based on the gunas of Prakṛiti—Tamas, Rajas and Satva. As we have seen, all the elements of Prakṛiti possess all these three gunas. The preponderance of Tamas represents the quality of inertia and indolence, of Rajas of activity and passions, of Satva of harmony and order. These are as we have seen the three stages in the evolution of this world or in the life of an individual. The description of the classes of people is based on the preponderance of one or the other of these gunas in some of the important characteristics of human beings. The characteristics so taken up are *Buddhi* (intelligence and will), *Dhṛiti* (perseverance), Faith & Worship, Body, Speech and Mind, Charity, Food and Pleasure.

The Gita makes two other classes, one of people having strong Rajasic temper called the *Asuras* and another of strong Satvic character called the *Devas*. These two classes are the human replica of the purely Satvic and Rajasic beings in the supra-physical planes who constantly affect us by their qualities.

The object in describing the different classes of people is evidently to give us an idea of people at different stages of development and to produce in us a zest for reaching the highest stage. It is only when the good and bad qualities of different classes of people are placed before us in a vivid manner, that we are impressed by their contrast and try to leave off the bad and take up the good qualities.

### 1. The Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.

The Gita describes the three kinds of men, (1) Satvic (2) Rajasic, and (3) Tamasic, by the three kinds of buddhi, dhriti, faith and worship, austerities, charity they possess, by the food they take and by the pleasures they indulge in, based on these three gunas.

#### 1. Buddhi

(18)29—Of Buddhi ( intelligence and will ) and Dhriti (steadiness and persistence) are of three kinds according to gunas ( the three qualities of Prakriti, Satva, Rajas, Tamas ); hear them related fully and separately.

(18)30—That which knows the law of action and of abstention from action, what is to be done and what is not to be done, what it to be feared and what is not to be feared, what binds the soul of man and what sets it free ; that buddhi is Satvic.

(18)31—That by which one knows in a mistaken way, the right and the wrong, and what ought to be done and what ought not to be done ; that buddhi is Rajasic.

(18)32—That which is enveloped in darkness, upholds that as the law ( *dharma* ) which is not the true law ( *adharma* ) and sees all things in a perverted light ; that buddhi is Tamasic.

## 2 Dhr̥iti ( perseverance )

(18)33—That unswerving dhr̥iti by which, through Yoga, one controls the mind, the senses and the life, that dhr̥iti is Satvic.

(18)34—But that dhr̥iti by which one holds fast to duty, pleasure and wealth and with great attachment to them; desires for fruits, that is Rajasic.

(18)35—That by which a stupid man does not give up sleep, fear, grief and despondency and also pride, that dhr̥iti is Tamasic.

## 3 Faith and worship

(17)4—Satvic men worship gods, the Rajasic worship the Yakshas ( keepers of wealth ) and the demoniac forces ; the others, the Tamasic, worship spirits and ghosts

## 4 Austerities of Body, Speech and Mind

(17)14—The worship of the gods, of the twice-born, of teachers and of the wise, purity, straightforwardness continence and non-injury are called the austerities of our body.

(17)15—Speech which gives no offence, which is truthful pleasant and beneficial; the regular recitation of

the Scriptures, are called the Austerity of Speech.

(17)16—Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control, purity of mind; this is called the Austerity of Mind.

(17)17—The threefold austerity, practised with utmost faith, harmonised, with no desire for fruit, is said to be Satvic.

(17)18—The austerity which is done with the object of gaining respect, honour and reverence and for the sake of show is said to be Rajasic; it is unstable and transitory.

(17)19—That austerity which is done with a foolish obstinacy, by means of self-torture or with a concentration of energy in a will to hurt others; that is said to be Tamasic.

## 5 Charity

(17)20—That gift which is made to one from whom no return is expected, with the feeling that it is one's duty to give and which is given in proper place and time and to a right person is held to be Satvic.

(17)21—But that gift which is made with the hope of return, or with the expectation of future gain, or given reluctantly, that gift is held to be Rajasic.

(17)22—The gift which is given at the wrong place or time, to undeserving person, without regard for

the feelings of the recipient and with contempt, is declared to be Tamasic.

## 6 Food.

(17)7—Even the food which is dear to all is of three kinds as also sacrifices, austerities and charity Hear then the distinction of them.

(17)8—The foods which promote vitality, strength, health, cheerfulness and appetite ; which are savoury, soft, nourishing and agreeable are liked by the Satvic people.

(17)9—The foods that are bitter, sour, saltish excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning, producing pain, grief and disease are liked by the Rajasic.

(17)10—That which is stale, tasteless, stinking, cooked overnight ; refuse and unclean is the food dear to the Tamasic.

## 7. Pleasure

(18)36-37—And now hear from Me of the threefold pleasure. That pleasure which one by self discipline rejoices and which puts an end to pain ; that which is like poison at first, but like nectar in the end ; that pleasure is said to be Satvic, born of the satisfaction of the higher mind and Spirit.

(18)38—That which is born from the contact of the their objects, which at first is nectar but the end is like poison, that pleasure is Rajasic.

(18)39—That pleasure of which delusion is the beginning and delusion is the result ; which arises from sleep, indolence and ignorance ; that is declared to be Tamasic.

## II. The Asura and the Deva.

(16)6—There are two types of beings created in the world—the Daivic and the Asuric; the Daivic has been described at length ; hear from Me the Asuric.

(16)5—The Daivic qualities are said to make for liberation, the Asuric for bondage ; grieve not, oh Arjuna, thou art born with the Deva nature.

### 1. The Deva

(16)1—Fearlessness, purity of mind, steadfastness in knowledge and yoga ; charity, self-control, sacrifice, study of Scriptures, austerity and uprightness.

By Yoga is meant direct perception of the knowledge by concentration and self-control.

(16)2—Non-injury, truth, absence of wrath, renunciation, tranquility, absence of fault-finding, compassion to living beings, freedom from covetousness, gentleness, modesty, steadiness (absence from fickleness).

(16)3—Vigour, forgiveness, patience, cleanliness, absence of malice and pride ; these are the endowments of man born with the Deva nature.

### 2. The Asura.

(16)4—Ostentation, arrogance, excessive self-esteem,

## CHAPTER XIV

### Buddhi Yoga

The final aim of our existence is to obtain release of the soul from attachment to Prakṛiti for this attachment is the cause of the soul being entangled in the cycles of birth and death. The Gita describes four methods for obtaining release named Jñan Yog Bhakti Yog Karm Yog and Raj Yog respectively. These methods relate to the four inherent powers of man i.e. knowledge devotion work and concentration of mind. These powers are possessed in more or less degree by all human beings but are applied without understanding their true principles so that these powers are frittered away in satisfying the various desires of the senses. The Gita however describes their principles and lays down definite plans to develop these powers on the right lines. By acting upon them we soon acquire peace of mind and find noticeable improvement towards perfection and liberation.

But the development of the powers of our knowledge, devotion works and concentration of mind can only be effected through Buddhi. We have seen under the Sankhya philosophy that it was 'Buddhi' which gave

effect to the involution of this world and the Buddhi is the last element so far reached by man in the evolution of this world. It is more developed in man than in any other creature. As Purusha is inactive we have to employ Buddhi, the highest element of the active Prakriti to realize the Divine.

This Chapter deals with Buddhi Yoga, a common feature of all the four Yogas. It tells us in a general way how we can utilize the Buddhi for union with the Divine.

We have seen under the Sankhya philosophy that we obtain knowledge of the outside world through senses and mind. The mind receives impressions of external objects through the sense organs and recalling the previous impressions connected with them, arranges them in order, and places them before buddhi for orders. It is evident that these orders can be obtained or carried out by the mind, provided the mind be under the control of the buddhi. If however, this be not so, the mind will act on the dictates of desire or to satisfy the senses. The first thing we have therefore to do is to control the senses.

Control of senses is necessary for obtaining the judgement of Buddhi and in order that the mind may act on the judgement of Buddhi, control of senses is again necessary. Control of senses thus leads to proper understanding or to wisdom. It leads to peace of mind, steadiness in dualities of pain and happiness and non-attachment to sense objects. Of course complete self control of the vagaries of the mind is effected only when we seek the



help of a power of higher order i.e. the spirit which is eternal and immutable

When self control is effected we have to concentrate the Buddhi on the soul and not let it be frittered away on the many objects of the outer world. This concentration leads to union with the Self and to wisdom and liberation.

By union with the Divine one is released from future births and from bondage of works. Dualities do not affect him. He becomes desireless, works impersonally and with knowledge. Unity with the Divine leads to even-mindedness. He sees the Divine in all. Scriptures are of no use to such a man.

It should not be imagined that efforts in this direction are lost at death. This is not so. We start in the next life from the point where we had left and so we continue to progress till in the course of several lives liberation is attained.

A liberated sage is altogether different from an ordinary man. He casts away all desires and is satisfied in the Self. He is free from fear and wrath and has steady wisdom. He is unattached to works or the fruits of works. He is not pleased with good news nor worried at evil news. He has complete control of himself.

## 1 Self control, the first step

1 Control of senses necessary for understanding

(2)60—The turbulent senses do violently snatch away

the mind of even a wise man striving after perfection.'

(2)67—When the mind runs after the roving senses, it carries away the understanding, even as wind carries away a boat on the waters.

2. Attachment to sense objects destroys understanding.

(2)62—When a man dwells in his mind on the objects of sense, attachment to them is produced. From attachment springs desire, and from desire springs anger ( when the desire is not fulfilled ).

(2)63—From anger comes bewilderment and from bewilderment loss of memory; from loss of memory the destruction of Buddhi and from the destruction of Buddhi, he perishes.

3. Non-attachment to works or sense objects, i.e. Self-control leads to peace.

(5)12—The well-poised abandoning attachment to the fruits of works, attains peace, born of steadfastness; the unbalanced one led by desire, is bound by being attached to the fruit ( of action ).

(5)22—The enjoyments born by contact of things are causes of sorrow; they have a beginning and an end; therefore a wise man does not seek pleasure in them.

(5)21—When the soul is no longer attached to external contacts ( of objects ), one finds the happiness that exists in the Self; such a one enjoys imperishable

happiness, because his Self is in Yoga, yukta, by Yoga with the Brahman.

(2)64—But the self-controlled man moving among the objects of sense, with senses under control, and free from attraction and aversion, attains to peace.

(2)65—In that peace, all sorrow is destroyed For the Buddhi of him who is tranquil-minded, is soon established in firmness.

(2)70—He attains peace, into whom all desires enter as waters into the sea, which though ever being filled is as ever motionless, not he who is disturbed by every little inrush of desire.

(5)13—The embodied soul who has controlled the senses, renouncing all actions by the mind ( i.e. inwardly and not outwardly ), sits happily in this City of nine gates, neither acting nor causing anything to be done.

The nine gates of the body are—two eyes, two ears, two nostrils one mouth two organs of ejection

The self-controlled man realises that all actions are done by Prakṛiti and not by himself and so sits as a witness

(5)23—He who can bear in the body, the impulse arising from lust and anger, he is steadfast (in Yoga), the happy man.

4 Self-control leads to Wisdom

(2)68—He whose senses are restrained from their objects, his wisdom is firmly set.

(2)61—Having brought all senses under control, the steadfast sits firm in Yoga, wholly given up to Me; for he whose senses are controlled, his wisdom is firmly set.

5 Self-control leads to Steadiness in dualities.

(6)7—When one has conquered one's self and attained serenity, then the Supreme Self in man becomes poised and steady towards heat and cold, pain and happiness, honour and dishonour.

6 Complete Self-control effected by union with the Divine.

(2)59—If one abstains from sense objects, the objects of sense cease to affect, but the taste for them remains (in the mind); even the taste also ceases when the Supreme is seen.

It is no use abstaining from sense objects i.e. from outer renunciation, for then the taste or longing for them remains in the mind. This longing goes when we attain to union with the Divine. We can completely control the mutable elements of Lower Prakriti, by the Immutable Spirit only.

II. Concentrate the mind on inner knowledge. The second step.

1. There should be one purpose of Buddhi.

(2)41—The fine and resolute *Buddhi* is one, but the purposes of the irresolute are many-branched and endless

*Buddhi* here comprises intelligence and will. An ordinary man employs his *Buddhi* for multifarious purposes which as explained in the introduction of this chapter, lead to transitory pleasures and generally to pain and sorrow. By concentrating the *Buddhi* on the Self we realise the Self, gain the All-knowledge of the Divine and attain the goal of liberation.

2 Concentration of mind leads to union with the Self and so to wisdom and liberation.

(2)51—The wise, who have united their *Buddhi* (with the Divine), renouncing the fruits of actions and liberated from the bondage of birth, they reach the Divine Status.

(2)66—For one who is not in Yoga, there is no *Buddhi*. Nor has he concentration of thought. To the man without concentration, there is no peace, and for one without peace, how can there be happiness?

(8)8—With the mind made steadfast by the undeviating Yoga of constant practice, when a man meditates on the supreme Purusha, he goes and is merged in that spirit.

III. Union with the Divine. The third and final step.

1 By union with the Divine, one is released from further births.

(5)24—He who has the inner happiness, whose relaxation is within and has the inner light, that Yogi becoming Brahman, gains absolute freedom ( attains to liberation while in the body ).

(5)25—Sage with imperfections effaced, doubts removed, senses controlled, engages in the good of all beings, obtains Nirvana in the Brahman ( is merged in the Immutable aspect of the Divine ).

(2)53—When thy Buddhi which is bewildered by the Vedic texts, shall stand unmoving and stable in spirit ( i.e. in the Samadhi ), then shalt thou attain to self-realisation.

2. Unity with the Divine frees one from bondage of works

(2)39—The Blessed Lord said I have given the wisdom of the Sankhyas to thee, O Arjuna, Listen now to the Yoga; if thou art in Yoga by the buddhi, thou shalt cast away the bondage of works.

As has already been stated all thoughts and actions leave impressions on the soul, which in turn become the cause of further actions. This chain of cause and effect is endless and it is because of this that the soul has to take new birth. If we have wisdom and understand the real truth, our works will be without attachment, desireless, and without egoism. Then our works will not leave impressions on the soul and we will escape from the bondage of works.

(4)23—When a man is liberated from attachment,

whose mind is firmly founded in self-wisdom, does works as sacrifice, all his work is dissolved.

3 By remaining in union with the Divine dualities do not affect us

(2)50—One who has united his buddhi (with the Divine), casts away even in this life, both good and evil. Therefore strive to be in Yoga. Yoga is skill in works

A man in union with the Divine rises above the ethical distinctions of good and evil. It is only when the soul identifies itself with Prakriti that it feels the dualities of good and evil liking and disliking, which are like the crest and ebb of waves produced by the disequilibrium of the gunas of Prakriti. When the soul realises that it is separate and distinct from Prakriti it rises above the gunas of Prakriti and then the distinctions of good and evil fall away

(2)45—The actions of the three gunas of Prakriti is the subject matter of the Vedas, but do thou become free from the three gunas, be free from the dualities, ever based in the true Being, not caring for possessions and keeping established in the Self.

(5)20—With the intelligence stable, unbewildered, the knower of Brahman, resting in the Brahman, one rejoices not in obtaining what is pleasant, nor sorrows in obtaining what is unpleasant.

4 Unity with the Divine means desirelessness impersonality and knowledge (or removal of doubts)

(2)71—Who abandons all desires and acts free from longing, without the sense of "I" and "Mine", he attains to peace.

(2)72—This is to have one's being in the Brahman (Immutable aspect of the Divine). Having attained this, one is not bewildered; being established therein even at the end of life, one can attain to oneness with the Brahman.

(4)35—Possessing the knowledge, thou shalt not fall again into the mind's ignorance, for by this thou shalt see all existences without exception in the Self (the Akshara or Immutable aspect of the Divine) and then in Me (the Purushotama).

The man who has self control and concentrates with his intelligence and will on the inner Self, becomes in union with the Self, or the Immutable aspect of the Divine. If he remains at this stage, he will cease from doing all works, for the Immutable is inactive. But the man at this stage gets all wisdom and then strong love or devotion to the Personal aspect of the Divine takes hold of him and he attains to unity with the Purushotama, who is at once the Akshara and the Kshara, the Immutable. Inactive, as well as the Mutable and Active and also transcends both these aspects.

(15)5—Free from egoism, with the evil of attachment conquered, all desires stilled, liberated from the dualities of joy and grief, thus the undeluded reach that goal Eternal.



(15)6—There we find the Timeless Being which is not illumined by Sun or Moon or fire ( but is itself the life Eternal ): having gone there, they return not; that is the Eternal status of My being.

5 Unity with the Divine leads to Even-mindedness or  
Equility of Mind

(5)18—The knowers of the Self look with an equal eye on a Brahman, the cow, the elephant, the dog, the outcaste.

(5)19—Even here on earth, creation has been conquered by them whose minds are established in equality; Brahman is even, flawless, therefore these persons rest in Brahman (Immutable aspect of the Divine).

By conquering the creation is meant, overcoming illusion of the existences being separate and finite, for in reality they are the One. Such sages become as even-minded as the Brahman Himself who is the One, the Eternal, the Immutable, Self-conscious and Self-Delight

(6)8—The Yogin who is satisfied with Self-knowledge, is tranquil, master of his senses, regarding alike clod and stone and gold, is said to be in Yoga (union with the Divine).

(6)9—He who is equal to friend and enemy and to neutral and indifferent, also to sinner and saint, he excels

(6)32—He who sees with equality and everything in

the image of the Self, whether it be grief or happiness, such a man is considered superior.

6. The Yogin sees Him in all.

(6)30—He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me, to him I do not get lost, nor does he get lost to Me.

(6)31—The Yogin who is established in unity and worships Me in all beings, in whatever way he lives and acts, lives in Me.

7. The Yogin is most superior

(2)49—Far inferior indeed is the mere action to the Yoga of Buddhi; seek refuge in Buddhi. Pitiful are those who seek for the fruits (of action).

(6)46—The Yogin is greater than the doer of austerities, greater than the man of knowledge, greater than the man of works; become then the Yogin.

(3)1—Arjuna said: If Thou holdest Buddhi to be greater than action, why then dost Thou urge me, this terrible deed (of battle).

(3)2—With this confused and mingled utterance, Thou seemest to bewilder my buddhi. Tell me then decisively that one thing by which I may attain to the higher good.

(3)3—The Blessed Lord said: In this world a twofold way (for entering into union with the Brahman) has been taught of yore by Me, the path of knowledge for

**the men of contemplation and that of work by men of action**

There are two kinds of men (1) who possess strong mental power (2) men firm in action. We can employ these two our natural powers to enter the Brahmic status. But these are not quite distinct or exclusive of one another. For every one must work even for his own existence and every one must have some knowledge to work in the proper way. These two methods are complementary. See the next verse.

**(3)8—Do thou perform thy allotted work, for action is better than inaction, even the maintenance of thy body can not be effected without action**

The Gita regards the Yogin i.e. the one who has united himself with the Divine as having attained the most superior stage of Self-realisation. This however does not mean that we should give up all work. We should continue to perform our allotted works i.e. our duty according to our svabhav as this is the path to lead us to Self-realisation and unity with the Divine. The paths of Knowledge of Devotion of Works and of Raj Yoga are different ways of Self-realisation. They seem to be different in the beginning but as we progress these paths intermingle and coalesce and finally lead to union with the Divine.

8 To one in union with the Divine scriptures are of no use

**(2)52—When thy Buddhi crosses the whirl of delusion**

then thou shalt become indifferent to what has been heard (of the Scriptures) and what is yet to be heard.

#### IV. No effort is lost.

(2)40—On the path (the Buddhi Yoga) no effort is lost and no obstacle prevails. Even a little of this dharma delivers from the great fear.

Every effort in this direction counts. Even if one dies, he starts from where he had left in his last life.

Want of spiritual knowledge in man creates many doubts and fears, for at every step he meets with problems which he can not solve. He does not understand the nature of the Divine, the truths of our existence and the purpose of creation which become the cause of doubts and fears in him.

#### V. Characteristics of a sage.

1 Sage is entirely different from an ordinary man.

(2)69—What is night for all beings is the time of working for the self-mastering sage ; and what is time of waking for all beings is night for the sage who sees ( the Reality ).

An ordinary man is conscious only of the apparent phenomena of Prakriti and cannot see the Reality behind them. The sage sees the Reality and not the darkness of the apparent phenomena.

2. Signs of the man of fixed Buddhi.

(2)54—Arjuna said :- What is the sign of the man of

steady wisdom merged in Samadhi? How does the man of steady wisdom speak, how sit, how walk?

(2)55—The Blessed Lord said: When a man completely casts away all the desires of the mind, satisfied in the Self by the Self, then is he said to be of steady wisdom.

(2)56—He whose mind is undisturbed in the midst of sorrow and amid pleasure, is free from desire, from whom passions, fear and wrath have passed away, he is a sage of steady wisdom

(2)57—Who is in all things without attachment, not pleased at receiving good, nor vexed at evil, his wisdom is fixed.

(2)58—When also, like the tortoise, drawing in its limbs, he can completely withdraw the senses from their objects, then his wisdom becomes steady.

## CHAPTER XV

### Path of Knowledge ( Jnan Yog )

All the preceding chapters of this book are explanations of the Truths of the Divine, of creation and of our existence. All these subjects are included under the comprehensive term "Knowledge". The Chapter on Buddhi Yoga, gives general principles of self-control, concentration of Buddhi inwards and of man's union with the Divine. This Chapter gives some of the main principles of the Path of Knowledge.

There are three different kinds of knowledge, Satvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. We are however concerned here with Satvic knowledge only, the knowledge of the one Reality. Real knowledge is to realize that He is at once the Immutable, the Mutable and also transcends both these aspects. He pervades everywhere, but is too subtle to be seen by us. He is unattached yet Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of all existences. He has the qualities of senses, yet is without senses. He is enjoyer of the gunas yet devoid of gunas; unmoving yet moving; far and near; One and Many. He is the knowledge and the goal of knowledge.

Whatever works we do, they finally culminate in knowledge. By works we gain experiences, which determine our next birth and thus progressing by works and experiences, we gradually gain knowledge in the course of many lives.

The methods of gaining spiritual knowledge are many. We can gain knowledge through a teacher or through the consideration of the principles of knowledge. We can gain knowledge by acting on the principles of Karm Yog or through inner meditation. We can also gain knowledge by hearing religious discourses with faith and attention.

Knowledge releases us from sin and from bondage of works. By knowledge we realize the Self or the Divine. Knowledge also makes us devotees of the Divine.

The signs of a man of knowledge are that he understands the principles of the Divine and of existence and sees the Divine everywhere.

The characteristics of a man of knowledge are humility, justice, forbearance, service, steadiness, self-control, renunciation of sense objects, absence of egoism. He knows that life, death, old age, illness and pain are evils of life and ponders over these matters. He does not attach himself to actions or to family. He is even-minded, is devoted to the Divine. He lives in solitary places and has true knowledge.

### 1. Different kinds of knowledge.

(18)20—That by which the one Imperishable being is seen in all existences, one indivisible whole in all these divisions, know thou that knowledge as Satvic.

(18)21—That knowledge, which sees multiplicity of existences only in their separateness and distinct from one another, know thou that knowledge as Rajasic.

(18)22—That knowledge which is confined to one single effect and considers as if it were the whole, without seeing the real cause, without foundation in truth and has a narrow way of looking at things, is Tamasic.

Tamasic knowledge is confined to one narrow circle and draws broad conclusions from isolated incidents or facts. For instance confining one's love to oneself or to one's family, disregarding obligations to the community, nation or mankind. A man of Tamasic knowledge thinks that his narrow ideas or habits should be of universal application.

A Rajasic knowledge is occupied too much in the affairs of one item of work in hand, to consider its relation with other items of that work or with the basic purpose of the whole work. Such a knowledge produces fanaticism, nationalism or fascism.

A Satvic knowledge goes to the very root of the matter. It sees the one Divine in His various manifestations, an underlying spirit in the variety of phenomena.

## 2. The Real Knowledge.

(13)13—I will describe that which is to be known and by knowing which one attains to immortality. It is the Supreme Brahman, who is beginning-less and who



**is said to be neither Sat (existent) nor Asat (non-existent).**

It is the knowledge of the Divine that leads us to liberation and frees us from the cycles of birth and death

The Purushotama is at once the Akshara and the Kshara, the Immutable and the Mutable and transcends the phenomenal oppositions of existence and non existence. The real knowledge is that of the Divine the only Reality in the universe

The five verses that follow give a description of the Divine in a figurative way of speech. A fuller description of the Divine and of His powers and manifestations is given in Chapter IV. The terms Akshara, Kshara and Purushotama are explained fully there

**(13)14—With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, head and mouth everywhere, with eyes everywhere in the universe, He exists pervading all**

**(13)15—He has the qualities of all the senses and yet is without the senses; He is unattached yet supporting all; He is enjoyer of the gunas (i. e. of the working of Prakriti), yet devoid of the gunas.**

**(13)16—He is without and within all beings; He is unmoving and also moving; He is far and near, He is too subtle to be known.**

**(13)17—He is the One Indivisible, yet seems to be divided among beings. He is to be known as the Sustainer, Destroyer and the Creator of Beings**

(13)18—He is the light of all lights, and beyond darkness of ignorance. He is the knowledge and goal of knowledge. He is seated in the hearts of all.

(13)19—Thus the Field, knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly told. My devotee thus knowing, attains to My bhava (mad-bhava, the Divine nature).

(4)33—Knowledge-Sacrifice (Jnan-Yajna) is superior to sacrifice (performed) with material objects. All actions in their entirety culminate in knowledge.

By knowledge is meant Self-knowledge or knowledge of the Divine. The Gita says that all kinds of actions culminate in knowledge. Man has come in this world for Self-realisation so that he may be released from the cycles of birth and death and attain the Divine Status.

He gains experience through the words and actions of other people, through the study of different kinds of learning and through his own actions. All these experiences make their marks on the Soul and this aggregate of experiences decides the nature of his next birth. By gaining experiences in successive lives, an individual soul, finally gains real knowledge and is released from further births and is merged in the Divine. Thus all kinds of actions, all kinds of learning contribute towards the liberation of the soul or culminate in real Knowledge.

### 3. How is Knowledge gained.

(4)34—Learn that (Knowledge) by learning at the

feet of the teacher, by questions and by service ; the men of knowledge who have realised the Truth, will instruct thee in true knowledge.

(13)25—Knowledge comes by an inner meditation (Raja Yoga), through which the Eternal Self becomes apparent to us ; or it comes by the Yoga of the San-khyas (the knowledge of Purusha and Prakriti being separate principles) or it comes by the Yoga of works (Karm-Yoga)

(13)26—Others who are ignorant of these paths of Yoga may hear the truth from others. The persons who mould the mind according to what they heard with faith and concentration, also overcome death and go beyond immortality.

#### 4. Knowledge is the cause of Release.

(1) Knowledge releases us from sin

(10)1—The Blessed Lord said : Again listen to My Supreme word which I will tell thee, wishing for thy soul's good, now that thy heart is taking delight in Me.

(10)2—Neither the gods nor the great Rishis know My Origin, for I am, in every way the source of all the gods and of the great Rishis.

(10)3—He who knows Me as the unborn, without origin, the great Lord of the world, lives unbewildered among mortals and is delivered from all sin and evil.

(4)36—Even if thou be the most sinful among the

sinful, yet by the raft of knowledge, thou shalt go across all sins.

(5)17—Turning their Buddhi to That, directing their whole consciousness to That, making That their soul aim, their sins are washed away by the waters of Knowledge. They go whence there is no return ( to further lives in the world ).

(ii) All bondages of works are destroyed by knowledge.

(4)37—As a blazing fire turns to ashes its fuel, so does the fire of knowledge turn all works to ashes.

(4)41—He who has renounced all works by Yoga ( i.e. renounced the desire of or attachment to works ) and destroyed all doubts by knowledge, and is poised in the Self, is not bound by his works.

One who works without desire or attachment to works, his works make no impression on the soul. Ordinarily these impressions become the cause of further works. When the soul is attached to Prakriti, it has to take new birth so as to give effect to the latent cause of works, but if no impressions are made on the soul, the cause for future birth does not arise.

(4)42—Therefore by cutting with the sword of Knowledge this doubt about the Self that has arisen out of ignorance and abides in thy heart, take refuge in Yoga and stand up ( for battle ).

(iii) By Knowledge one sees the Self.

(5)16—Verily in whom ignorance is destroyed by

**Self-knowledge, that knowledge reveals the Supreme Self ( within ) like a Sun.**

(iv) By Knowledge one attains the Divine

**(4)10—Delivered from attachment, fear and wrath absorbed in Me, taking refuge in Me, purified by the fire of Knowledge, many have attained to My nature of being ( Mad-bhava )**

**(10)7—He who knows in right principles My pervading Lordship and Yoga power of Mine ( by which He appears as many ), unites himself to Me by an unshakable Yoga , of this there is no doubt.**

A liberated man knows that the Divine pervades everywhere. He understands the true aspect of the Divine, the Akshara and the Kshara the Immutable Impersonal and the Mutable Personal. Having attained to unity with Him he continues to work as He does.

(v) Nothing is equal to the purifying power of Knowledge

**(4)38—There is nothing verily in this world purifying like knowledge. The man who is perfect by Yoga, finds it of himself in course of time.**

**5. Knowledge leads to Devotion.**

**(10)8—I am the Origin of all , from Me everything evolves ; thus thinking, the wise worship Me with wrapped attention.**

Knowledge of the Divine leads one to ponder over the various mysteries of His manifestations which reveal

His All-wisdom Anything grand, beyond the power of intellect or which we cannot possess excites our admiration and worship.

(10)9—Their consciousness full of Me, their life given up to Me, enlightening each other, mutually talking about Me, they are ever satisfied and delighted.

(15)19—He who free from delusion, knows Me, the Purushotama, he knowing all, worships Me with all his heart.

(9)15—Others too, who seek Me by the sacrifice of knowledge (i.e. seeing the Self in all), worship Me in My oneness and in different beings, the manifold.

(18)54—When one has become the Brahman, when one serene in the Self, neither grieves nor desires, when he is equal-minded, then one gets to the supreme love and devotion to Me (Purushotama).

(4)35—Possessing that knowledge thou shalt not fall again into the mind's ignorance, for by this, thou shalt see all existences in the Self, then in Me (Purushotama).

The above two verses explain that after one has acquired Knowledge and unity with the Immutable Impersonal aspect of the Divine, he has great longing of love and devotion for the Purushotama. Who represents both the Immutable Impersonal and the Mutable Personal aspects of the Divine and also transcends them both.

Gradually the worshipper and the worshiped become the One

Union with the Immutable Impersonal aspect of the Divine produces in man distaste for society and for work. But when he joins the Purushatma he has integral knowledge of His two aspects. He remains in union with Him and also carries out all duties impersonally, desirelessly as the Divine does.

## 6. Signs of the man of knowledge.

(13)24—He who thus knows the Purusha and Prakriti with its gunas, whatever his life, is not born again.

(18)29—Perceiving the same Lord existent everywhere, he injures not himself ( by being subject to the whirl of life and death and the dualities of pain and happiness of the worldly life ) and so attains to the supreme Status

A man of knowledge perceives the soul's identity with the Divine and His omnipresence. He perceives the Immutable aspect of the Divine pervading everywhere.

(13)31—When he sees the separate existences of all beings abiding in the One Eternal Being and spreading forth from it, then he attains to Brahman.

The Brahman is the Immutable aspect of the Divine, the Akshara

(13)28—Seated equally in all beings, the Supreme Lord, Imperishable in the Perishable—he who thus

sees, he sees ( the Reality ).

(13)35—They who thus with the eye of Knowledge perceive the distinction between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna and also the liberation of beings from Prakriti, they go to the Supreme.

## 7. The Characteristics of the Man of Knowledge.

(13)8—Humility, unpretentiousness, justice, forbearance, uprightness, service to the teacher, steadiness, self control.

(13)9—Renunciation of sense objects, and also absence of egoism and the feeling that life, death, old age, illness and pain are all evils.

By reflection on these things, one turns to the inner Self for knowledge

(13)10—Non-attachment ( to fruits of actions ), not being absorbed with one's wife and children, one's home and the like ; having an equal frame of mind in the occurrence of the desirable or the undesirable.

(13)11—Unswerving devotion to Me by the Yoga of non-separation, remaining in solitary places, distaste for the society of men.

(13)12—Constant application to the spiritual knowledge, understanding of the end of true knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance.



## CHAPTER XVI

### Path of Devotion ( Bhagti Yoga )

The subject of 'Devotion' can be divided under the following headings —

#### 1 Classess of Devotees

The Gita classifies devotees into four classes

- (i) Those who worship Him in distress
- (ii) Those who worship Him for worldly gifts
- (iii) Those who worship Him for Knowledge
- (iv) Those who worship Him with Knowledge

The Gita regards all devotees as noble but the best is the devotee who has Knowledge

#### 2 Devotion easier than Knowledge

The Gita discusses the question whether we should worship the Immutable, Unmanifest i.e. the Akshara aspect of the Divine and whether it is possible to realize Him in this way. The Gita tells us that it is possible to do so by one who has Self-control has equality of mind and who worships Him in the form of all creatures. It is however very much easier to worship the Purushotama for we can

think of Him in any one of His several manifestations. The worship of the Purushotama is superior to that of His Immutable Unmanifest aspect, because by doing so we attain the highest status of the Divine.

3. The devotee is the best of all those who seek the Divine.

The Gita regards the Yogin (one who is in union with the Divine) better than the doer of austerities, better than the man of knowledge, better than the man of works. But of all the Yogins, a devotee is the best. The Jnan Yogi (man of knowledge) unites himself with the Immutable aspect of the Divine, a Karm Yogi (man of works), unites with Him in His power of being and nature, but a devotee dwells in the Divine.

4. One united with Brahman attains to Purushotama, by Devotion.

We attain to the Immutable aspect of the Divine (Brahman) by Knowledge, but in order to attain the status of the Purushotama, we have to be intensely devoted to Him in His aspect of a Person.

5. Even the lowliest offering is acceptable to the Divine.

The Divine wants devotion and does not care for the value of offering made to Him. Even a leaf or cup of water offered to Him with devotion is acceptable to Him.

6. The Divine is won by Devotion.

The Divine is won by unswerving devotion. We have

to offer to Him mentally all our actions, all our senses all our energy and sacrifice everything to Him. We have to fix our mind on Him, revere Him, take Him as the supreme goal of life, be always one in heart and consciousness with Him and take refuge in Him. We have to abandon all Dharma or rules of conduct and let Him entirely take possession of us and do everything for us.

*If we do this we are freed from the bondage of works and from the dualities of good and evil.*

God is impartial, but a devotee is in Him and He is in the devotee. The worshipper and the worshipped become one.

## 7 God helps the devotees

God provides everything that a devotee needs. He who surrenders himself entirely to Him, the Divine becomes responsible for his cares.

## 8 Even the sinful can win Him by devotion

A sinful man who turns to Him becomes righteous very soon. All those who have had no opportunity for gaining knowledge, such as women or the vaishyas and sudras, attain to Him when they entirely devote themselves to Him and then become All-wise.

## 9 The Devotee gets knowledge

Just as a man of knowledge becomes a devotee, similarly a devotee becomes a man of knowledge. Thus the two paths of knowledge and devotion, which seem to be separate in the beginning, coalesce and become one.

10. The Devotee is released from birth and death.

The devotee who attains the status of the Divine is not born again. He dwells in Him for ever.

11. State of Devotee.

The devotee has no egotism, is even-minded, desireless, patient, forgiving and firm of resolution.

12. Remembrance at the time of death.

A devotee who worships the Divine till the end of his life and dies remembering Him is released from future births.

1. Four kinds of Devotees.

(7)16—The virtuous ones who worship Me with devotion, are of four kinds :—(1) the distressed, (2) the seekers of worldly enjoyments, (3) the seekers of knowledge, (4) those who worship Me with knowledge.

There are first the distressed, who because of some calamity remember God ; secondly there are worldly people, who worship Him to attain some worldly object, such as wealth or offspring ; thirdly are those who seek spiritual knowledge. All these three worship the Divine with some object in view. The best however are the wise, who worship Him without any desire, with knowledge i.e. by understanding the principles of things.

(7)17—Of these the knower, who is ever in constant union with the Divine, whose devotion is single-minded

**for Him, is the best He loves Me perfectly and is My beloved**

Such a man has no desires no attachments no egoism for he has everything in the Divine who is Self-existent Self-conscious and full of Self-delight

**(7)18—Noble are all these, but the knower is verily Myself, for he is in union with Me—the Purushotama, his highest goal**

The Gita calls all the devotees noble whether they pray to the Divine for worldly things or for spiritual knowledge. They are at different stages of development but the very fact that they have faith and devotion to Him is the sign of their spiritual progress. They will one day reach the goal. This faith and devotion is bound to remove their pride and egoism and the gradual enlightenment resulting from it will remove their attachment to desires for the transitory worldly objects.

**(7)19—At the end of many births, the man of knowledge attains to Me. It is very difficult to find a soul who knows that Vasudeva (the Supreme) is all that is**

It is however not an easy matter to attain the Divine. The thing required is to realise that there is the One Divine everywhere and this realization comes after many births, even to the man of knowledge.

**2 Devotion easier than knowledge.**

**(12)1—Arjuna said: Those devotees, who thus ever**

steadfast, worship Thee, and those who worship the Unmanifest, the Immutable, which of these is better versed in Yoga.

The Divine has His two aspects, the Immutable, Unmanifest, Non-doer ( Akshara ) and the Mutable, Doer ( Kshara ), whom we see in the manifestations of different existences in this world. Above these is the Purushotama who appears to us in these two aspects, the Akshara and the Kshara. We can be in union with the Akshara by Jnan Yoga, which means immergence into the one Infinite existence—Sayujya. Yoga of works leads to oneness in power, being and nature with the Divine—Sadristya. By the Yoga of Devotion we dwell in the Divine—Salokya or be near the Divine—Samipya. The Gita has so far said that we should first be in union with the Akshara ( the Immutable Impersonal aspect ) and then by devotion be in union with the Purushotama. It is only when we are in union with the Purushotama who has a personal aspect also, that we remain in union with Him and also continue to do works, according to the Divine will.

The question now is whether we should worship the Unmanifest, Immutable, Qualityless Akshara or the Purushotama, who in addition to the above has the aspect of being the Many, is Manifest, Mutable and Qualityful. It is very difficult to worship the former aspect of the Divine because our mind can not perceive or imagine Him. We can only experience this by self-control and by contemplating on the mind by the mind itself, when the soul sees the soul or the Immutable aspect of the Divine. It is

easy to worship the Manifest i.e. the Divine as the Person or the Existence perceivable by us

(12)2—The Blessed Lord said : Those who fixing their minds on Me, worship Me, ever earnest and possessed of Supreme faith, them I consider to be perfectly in union of Yoga

The supreme faith is the faith which realizes that the same Divine is in the Unmanifest as well as in the Manifest, and also transcends both these aspects

(12)3-4—But those who worship the Indefinable, the Unmanifest, the Immutable, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchangeable, the Immobile, the Eternal, having restrained all senses, being even-minded in all conditions, engaged in the welfare of all creatures, they come to Me indeed.

(12)5—The difficulty of those who devote themselves to the Unmanifest is greater, for the goal of the Unmanifest is hard to reach by the embodied beings.

The Unmanifest, Unthinkable cannot be worshipped. We can only experience it by self-control and contemplation but this is very difficult for finite human beings

(12)6-7 But those who worship Me giving up all their actions to Me ( the Purushotama ), regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me with single-minded Yoga, whose mind is fixed on Me, verily I become the deliverer from the ocean of death-bound existence, before long.

It is easier to worship the Purushotama for he has a personal aspect as well as qualities. We can love Him as Father, Mother, Lover, Beloved, Friend or Refuge or in one of His manifestations ( see Chapter on 'The Divine' and Chapter on "Manifestations of the Divine" ).

**3. The Devotee is the best of all who seek the Divine.**

(6)46—The Yogin ( who is in union with the Divine ) is greater than the man of knowledge, greater than the man of works ; become then the Yogin.

(6)47—Of all the Yogins, he with the inner-self given up to Me, for Me has love and faith, him I consider to be the most united with Me in Yoga.

**4. When one has united with Brahman ( Immutable aspect of the Divine ), he attains the Purushotama by devotion.**

(18)54—Having become one with the Brahman, when serene in the Self, one neither grieves nor desires, when one is equal-minded to all beings, then one gets the supreme love and devotion to Me.

(18)55—By devotion he comes to know Me, what My measure is and principles of My being ; having then known Me, he enters into that ( Purushotama ).

When one has united himself with the Immutable aspect of the Divine, he gets supreme devotion to the Purushotama. By this supreme devotion, he gets complete knowledge of the principles of His being and unites with Him.



5. Even the lowliest offering of a devotee is acceptable to him.

(9)26 He who offers to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or a cup of water, that offering of love of the pure-minded I accept.

6. The Divine is won by devotion or perfect surrender.

(8)22—The Supreme Purusha in whom all existences abide and by whom all this is pervaded, can be gained by unswerving devotion.

(9)27—Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest, whatever energy of tapasya (austerity) thou puttest forth, make it an offering to Me.

(9)28—Thus shalt thou be freed from good and evil, results which constitute the bonds of action, with the heart steadfast in Yoga of renunciation and liberated thou shalt come to Me

(9)29—I am equal ( the same ) to all beings. None is hateful, nor dear to Me. But those who worship Me with devotion, they are in Me and I also in them.

God has no friend or foe He is impartial Every one has equal chance to reach Him But He makes one exception and that is His devotees The devotees dwell in Him and He is in them The worshipper and the worshipped are in the beginning two separate beings, but at higher spiritual stage, they become One Total self surrender and intense love for the Divine, leads one to this goal

(9)34—On Me fix thy mind, become My devotee, sacrifice to Me, revere Me ; thus having made the heart steadfast on Me, taking Me as the supreme goal, thou shalt come to Me.

(11)54—It is by unswerving devotion to Me, that I may in this Form ( perceiveable ), be known and seen in reality and also entered into.

(11)55—He who does work for Me alone and has Me for his goal, is devoted to Me free from attachment, who is free from enmity to all creatures, he enters into Me.

(18)56—And by doing also all actions always lodged in Me, he attains to My grace, the eternal and undying status.

(18)57—Resigning mentally all deeds to Me, having Me as the highest goal, resorting to Buddhi Yoga, do thou fix thy mind on Me.

(18)58—If thou art one in heart and consciousness with Me at all times, then by My grace, thou shalt overcome all obstacles; but if from self-conceit, thou hear not, thou shalt fall into perdition.

(18)62—Take refuge in Him with all thy being. By His grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace and eternal abode.

(18)63—Thus have I declared to thee knowledge more secret than all secrets. Reflect on this fully and do as thou choosest.

The teacher leaves the decision on the disciple after having fully taught him the secrets of knowledge. One should do what his Buddhi dictates him to do and should not be coerced to take a particular line of action. The teacher can only counsel the pupil or teach him but cannot force him to act upon his advice. Thus every one has freedom of choice. We have all the learning and knowledge before us in the shape of books and teachers. It is for us to take advantage of them, improve ourselves by Karm Yog, Jnan Yog, Bhagti Yog and Raj Yog so that we be in Yog with the Divine. Then all our acts will be done according to Divine Will and will be perfectly right.

**(18)64—Hear thou again My supreme word, the most supreme of all, because thou art beloved of Me, therefore I shall tell thee what is good for thee**

**(18)65—Occupy thy mind with Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me, so shalt thou come to Me, I promise to thee truly, for thou art dear to Me [This is a repetition of (9) 34]**

**(18)66—Abandoning all Dharma, take refuge in Me alone, I will liberate thee from all sins, grieve not**

This is the final word of the Gita. The Lord has placed several Dharmas before Arjuna. First is the Dharma for ordinary people based on the experiences of the race which changes according to the times and environments from age to age. Then there is the Svadharma based on the Svabhava of the individual which can be truly acted upon only when one's Buddhi becomes Satvic. But when we transcend the gunas of Prakriti there is the

immortal Dharma of the Divine, based on absolute truth and beauty. After having mentioned all these Dharmas, Lord Krishna now wants the pupil to give up all dharmas.

The Lord wants us to surrender ourselves entirely to the Divine, for the limited mind, life and body must be renounced to give room for the Divine light to take possession of us. The Dharmas already mentioned are meant for human beings at different stages of development. But the devotee who surrenders everything to the Divine, lets the Divine do everything for him need not have any Dharma, for the All-wise, the Infinite consciousness of the Divine is there to guide him. This is the greatest secret, which, Lord Krishna had been preparing his pupil to understand and follow.

## 7. God helps His devotees.

(9)22—To those who worship Me, making Me alone the whole object of their thought, to those constantly in Yoga with Me, to them I bring what they have not and preserve what they already have.

As we give ourselves upto the Divine, the Divine comes to us with His Infinite Power to take possession of us. He then becomes responsible for our cares and we spontaneously get what we need.

## 8. Even the Sinful can win Him by Devotion.

(9)30—Even if a man of very evil conduct, turns to Me with a sole and entire love, he must be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved.

If an evil person has turned to God with sole and entire love, it means that he has risen from his lower nature to take up his higher nature. Since the Divine helps His devotees, the progress of such a person towards the Divine becomes more rapid leaving little chance of his relapsing to the evil conditions of lower nature.

(9)31—Swiftly he becomes a soul of righteousness and obtains lasting peace. Know it thou to be certain that my devotee perishes never.

(9)32—Those who take refuge in Me, though of inferior birth, women, vaishyas, as well as Sudras, they also attain to the highest goal.

(9)33—How much more then, holy Brahmins and devoted royal saints, thou who hast come to this transient and sorrowful world, do thou worship Me.

For the Brahmins whose very profession is to acquire knowledge and king sages who have every facility to acquire knowledge and a vast field to practice it as Karm Yogins it is easy to turn to God. But those who have many disadvantages for acquiring knowledge such as men born of inferior birth, women shut up in the narrow circle of household, vaishyas engaged in producing wealth, Sudras engaged in manual work and having no opportunity for education even they when they turn to God with devotion attain to the highest goal. In the equality and oneness of the Divine all other distinctions of class and of the unjust social code made by the strong and the wise to exploit the weak in mind or body, are of no account. Though

they may not have the same facilities for education, they have equal chance to love the Divine, even more so because their low position and hard conditions naturally turn them towards God. The door of the Divine by way of devotion is open to all.

### 9. The Devotee gets knowledge.

(10)10—To those who are constantly devoted and worship Me with love, I grant the Buddhi Yoga, by which they come to Me.

From the moment there begins the state of intense devotion the Divine destroys the ignorance of the mind and gives us right knowledge.

(10)11—Out of compassion for them, I, lodged in their hearts, destroy the darkness of ignorance by lifting the blazing lamp of knowledge.

Devotion brings about Spiritual knowledge, revealing the identity of the Self with the Self of all and with the Divine. He realizes that all are in the One.

### 10. The Devotee is released from birth and death.

(8)14—He who constantly remembers Me, thinking of none else, the Yogin who is in constant union with Me, finds Me easy to attain.

(8)15—Having come to Me, these great souls do not get back to birth (in the world), the transient place of sorrow, for they have reached the highest perfection.

(8)16—All the worlds, from the world of Brahman downwards are subject to return to rebirth. But no rebirth is imposed on the soul that comes to Me ( the Purushotama ).

# 11. State of Devotee.

(12)13-14—He who has no egoism, no feelings of I and mine, who is friendly and compassionate and hates none, who is even-minded in pleasure and pain ; is patient and forgiving . who is ever constant, self-controlled and has the firm unshakable will and resolution of the Yogin and a devotion with mind and Buddhi given up to Me, he is dear to Me.

(12)15—He by whom the world is not afflicted or troubled, who is also not afflicted or troubled by the world, who is freed from lower nature, joy, envy, fear and anxiety, he is dear to Me.

(12)16—He who desires nothing, is pure, skilful in action, unconcerned and untroubled, renouncing all initiative of action, he My devotee is dear to Me.

(12)17—He who neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires, who has renounced good and evil, then full of devotion, is dear to Me.

(12)18—He who is equal to friend and foe, equal to good and evil, alike to cold and heat, pleasure and pain and who is free from attachment.

(12)19—He who holds equal blame and praise, who silent, content with anything that comes, who has

no fixed abode, is firm in mind, that man who is devoted, is dear to Me.

(12)20—But exceedingly dear to Me are those devotees who follow the Immortal Dharma as described above with faith, who make Me (the Purushotama) their one Supreme aim.

12. Remembrance at the time of death.

(8)5—Whoever at the time of death, goes forth leaving the body, remembering Me alone, comes to My bhava (status of being); there is no doubt about this.

(8)7—Therefore at all times remember Me and fight; for if thy mind and buddhi are always fixed on Me and given up to Me, thou shalt surely come.

The fight means, carrying out all the active works. We must fix our minds on Him while performing our duties, just as the mother keeps her attention fixed on the child while doing her work.

(8)8—For it is by meditating always on Him, with a consciousness attuned by constant practice, not wandering after anything else, that one can reach the Supreme Purusha and the Divine.

(8)9.10—He who meditates on the Seer, the Ancient, the Ruler, Subtler than the subtle, Supporter of all, whose form is inconceivable, self-luminous like the Sun, beyond the darkness of Maya (illusion), he who thus



meditates on Him at the time of death, full of devotion, with mind unmoving and also by the power of Yoga, fixing the whole Prana (life-force) between the eye-brows, he attains to that Supreme Divine Purusha.

This and the two subsequent verses describe the method of Yoga which Yogins practice and which is recommended at the time of death

(8)11—I shall describe briefly to thee that state which the knowers of the Veda call Imperishable, which ascetics freed from passion enter and desiring which they lead a life of self-control

(8)12-13—Controlling all the senses, concentrating the mind on the heart, drawing the prana (life-force) into the head, occupied in the practice of concentration, uttering Me as he departs, giving up the body, he goes to the higher status.

This is the condition of the Yogin at the time of death. This can only be done by a life-long practice of concentration and devotion to the Divine

(7)29-30—Those who strive for freedom from old age and death, taking refuge in Me, they know the Brahman (the Immutable Self), the whole of Adhyatma (the Reality underlying the individual Self) and Karma in its entirety (the principles of actions). Those who know Me with the Adhibhuta (the material existence), the Adhidaiva (spiritual existence) and the Adhiyajna (master of sacrifice i.e. the Puru-

shotama), they keep knowledge of Me even at the time of death and have their consciousness in union with Me (Purushotama) ; (therefore they attain Me).

It is thus clear that only he who has complete knowledge of Matter, the Spirit, the Divine, of the nature of Karma and who is full of devotion to the Divine up to the time of death, only he can be released from future birth and attain the Divine. Release is the result of ceaseless effort and perfect devotion in several lives and not of simple repetition of the name of the Lord at the time of death.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### Path of works ( Karma Yoga )

Karm Yog tells us how to perform works so as to ensure success and happiness in this world and liberation from bondage to works or from cycles of birth and death. Evidently this science is of the greatest importance to us. It needs to be studied thoroughly and in all its aspects. We shall study it from the following points of view

I        What is the relation of Karma with the Divine and with the Truths of our existence

II       The Analysis of works—Under this head we will study the causes which lead to an action and analyse it from the points of view of mental as well physical parts of an action

III      Naish-Karmya—i.e. the state of mind which results in right action. With this state of mind works produce *no marks or impressions on the soul*. These impressions become the cause of further actions and compel the soul to take another birth. If works be done in the Naish Karmya way, cause for another birth does not arise and the soul is released from the bondage of Prakriti. As Naish-Karmya leads to results of the greatest importance to us we would

naturally be anxious to know how to attain this state of mind

IV. How to strive for attaining Naish-Karmya—This part tells us the methods of attaining the Naish-Karmya state of mind

V. No effort is lost—The Gita tells us that no effort is lost. The task of attaining Naish-Karmya state of mind is so difficult that it can not be accomplished in one life. If all this effort be lost with death and we have to begin over again in the next life, evidently this task will never be accomplished. The Gita tells us that we begin from the point we left in the last life and thus by continuous effort we can attain Naish-Karmya in a few spans of life.

VI. Signs of Right Action—The Gita says that all the signs of right action are internal and not external. It gives us details of right action.

VII. One should work even after liberation—The question arises that when one has attained liberation, should he continue to work or cease from doing all works. The Gita says that the liberated man has nothing more to gain by works, but he should work for the good of the people. He should set an example to others. The Avtar quotes His own example and says that He Himself works for the good of the people and explains the necessity of it.

VIII. Karm Yog versus Renunciation—The Gita discusses this point in detail and prefers Karm Yog to Renunciation. It explains that Renunciation of the world is of no use unless mind be controlled i.e. unless we have learnt

to act on the principles of Karm Yog. Certain categories of works should not be renounced in any case

---

## 1. The Philosophy of Karma (Action)

In order to understand the real Truth of Karma, we have to consider it in relation to the Divine and to the Truths of our existence. The Gita describes these in the following verses

(8)1—Arjuna said: What is Brahman, what is Adhyatma (Lord of body)? What is Karma? What is called Adhibhuta and what is Adhidaiva?

(8)2—What is Adhiyajna in the body, and how art Thou to be known at the time of departure (death) by the self-controlled.

(8)3—The Blessed Lord said: The Akshara is the supreme Brahman, Svabhav is called Adhyatma. Karma is the name given to creative force that brings out into existence.

(8)4—Adhibhuta is the mutable nature; Purusha is the Adhidaiva. I alone am the Lord of Sacrifice—Adhiyajna in the body.

The above are only brief definitions of the various Truths of the Divine all closely connected with one another. We can not understand one of these Truths without knowing its relation with other Truths and with the whole i.e. with the Divine.

We have seen that the Purushotama or the Divine appears to us in two aspects, the Akshara, the Immutable and the Kshara, the Mutable. An individual soul or Purusha is the becoming of the Divine Power called Para Prakriti. Matter, energy or body is also a Divine Power called Apra Prakriti. Every individual has special qualities, the Svabhav, distinct from others. All these matters have been dealt with separately in different chapters. The question now is what is Karma and what connection has it with other Truths of the Divine.

We have seen that a living being is composed of a soul or spirit and body made of the elements of Prakriti, i.e. buddhi, ahankar, mind, senses, tanmatras and primordial elements. The force of Prakriti works through them and the result is according to the stage of development reached by these elements. Our purpose in life is to develop these elements to satvic stage. When this stage is reached, buddhi realizes that it is not the soul but Prakriti which works. Once this realization comes, the soul ceases from identifying itself with Prakriti and is released from its bondage.

On the other hand, if we consider this matter from a higher plane, we find that it is the Divine that manifests Himself in different stages of evolution by limiting His apparent consciousness and keeping the whole of consciousness latent. It is altogether latent in matter and is gradually released more and more as we advance in the scale of evolution, becoming wholly apparent in the superconscious stage. This limiting of the consciousness is the cause of ignorance.

The power by which the Divine thus limits His consciousness is called Maya. Prakriti is the power which produces various perceptible and finite objects. These objects are termed Adhibhuta. Thus Maya, Prakriti and Adhibhuta are synonymus terms.

Karma is the activity or action performed by a human being or by other existences or by natural forces. But although we say that we or the natural forces are performing an action, it is really the energy of Prakriti which does it through its elements the buddhi, ahankar, mind, senses, tanmatras and primordial elements as explained under Sankhya philosophy. All that is in the Svabhav is loosed out into its creative energy and Prakriti strives to express it subjectively or otherwise under the limitations of time and space. As we have seen in the chapter on Svabhav the qualities and powers of Svabhav, are in this manner distorted and it is only when the buddhi reaches the Satvic stage that these are truly reproduced in actions in this world.

Thus Karma is also of the same nature as Maya, Prakriti and Adhibhuta. Karma, however, has the importance of determining our character and our liberation. What we think and do leave an impression on the soul and an aggregate of such impressions makes our character and these impressions become the cause of our future thoughts and actions. Just as a seed sown in ground sprouts into a tree and bears the same kind of seeds, and which if sown again in the ground repeat the process similarly our thoughts and actions go down into the soul and become the cause of further thoughts and actions.

After death, the impressions of these thoughts and actions compel the soul to take a new body so as to give expression to the impressions formed in the previous life. This results in unending cycles of birth and death and is the cause of bondage of the soul to Prakriti. If however by some means, we can avoid impressions of thoughts and actions from affecting the soul, there will be no cause of another birth. The soul is in reality eternal, immutable, self-conscious and inactive. It is only because it identifies itself with Prakriti that it is compelled to take birth. But when this cause does not arise, it ceases to take a new birth and is liberated. The way to do it is by creating a state of mind called Naish-Karma, in all our actions

## II. The analysis of works.

### 1. The five causes of an action.

(18)13—Learn of Me, these five causes for the accomplishment of all works as laid down by the Sankhyas.

(18)14—These five are the body (Adhithana), the doer (karta), the various instruments (karana), many kinds of efforts (cestah) and last the fate (daivam).

(18)15—The five elements are the causes of whatever action a man undertakes with the mind, speech or body, whether right or wrong.



The body comprises all the elements of Prakriti that go to make it, i.e. buddhi, ahankar, mind, senses, tanmatras and 5 primordial elements. These are the instruments of the force of Prakriti. For an individual, these elements are at a particular stage of development. The force of Prakriti acts through them, so that action is done according to the stage of development reached by these elements of Prakriti.

The Doer, as we have already seen is Prakriti and not the Soul. The various instruments are the elements of Prakriti. The many kinds of efforts to accomplish an action are the result of this force of Prakriti. The fate or Daivam refers to the unseen power, other than the visible mechanism of Prakriti which affect actions in order to fulfil the Divine purpose of creation. It will thus be seen that all these factors which apparently are separate and finite are really the forces of Prakriti, i.e. it is the Prakriti, a power of the Divine which accomplishes all works.

But considering from the point of view of our human mind or the ego, the above verses can be applied literally to all works that we carry out. For instance take the work of a potter turning out pottery by means of the potter's wheel. Here (1) adhishthana is the place where the work of turning out pottery is done, (2) the doer is the potter, (3) the karana are the various instruments employed by the potter, (4) cestah are the many efforts or parts of the work of pottery, such as turning the wheel, kneading the earth, drying, painting etc. (5) fate, comprises the unseen causes which may affect the work of the potter, such as weather, the market prices, natural calamity etc.

(18)16—That being so, he who owing to ignorant understanding looks upon his Self as the sole agent, he of perverted mind sees not.

(18)17—He who is free from ego-sense, whose buddhi is not affected, though he kills these people, he kills not, nor is bound ( by action ).

It will be seen from the above two verses that the Gita wants to make it clear that it is only the Prakriti which is responsible for all the different factors which apparently contribute towards the completion of an action. To imagine that it is one's self that is the doer, is to misunderstand the true principles of action. When one is free from ego-sense and does works impersonally according to the Divine will, he is not bound by works, although the work that he may be doing be of the magnitude of the battle of Kurukshetra

## 2 The mental and physical parts of an action.

(18)18—Knowledge ( Jnan ), object of knowledge ( Jney ), and the knower ( Jnata ) are the threefold mental impulses to work. There are also three things, the doer ( Karta ), the instruments ( Karana ) and the work done ( Karma ) that hold the action together and make it possible.

Before we do any work, we have to think out mentally about it. There are three factors in this mental operation. The person ( Jnata ) first thinks of the work to be done in his mind ( Jneya ) and plans out the methods of doing it ( Jnan ). This mental operation, constituting the elements

of Jnata ( person ) Jneya ( the object of knowledge ) and the Jnan ( knowledge ) is called Karma Codana

When one begins to carry out the action there are also three elements of his external action (1) The person ( Karta ) gets together all the various things and implements ( Karana ) and then the action ( Karma ) is done. These three elements in the external action Karta ( doer ) Karana ( implements ) and Karma ( work ) are termed Karma Sangraha

The characteristics of Jnana Jneya and Jnatā have already been considered metaphysically in previous chapters. We are now considering these elements in relation to work. We can leave out Jnatā and consider it in the aspect of Karta. We can also leave out Jneya ( object of knowledge ) and Karana ( instrument ) as these need no analysis according to their qualities. The object as far as work is concerned is something definite such as turning out pottery and the instruments are also fixed and do not affect the point of view from which we are considering works. The elements which affect us are Jnata ( knowledge ) Karma ( the action itself ) and Karta ( the doer ). Let us consider these three factors one by one. These factors are made of Prakṛiti and so constitute all the three gunas Sattva Rajas and Tamas. Let us see what is the effect of the preponderance of one or the other of these three gunas on these three factors (i) Jnan ( knowledge ) (ii) Karma ( action ) (iii) Karta ( doer )

(18)19—Jnan Karma and Karta are of three kinds

according to the Sankhya philosophy, according to the differences in the gunas. Hear thou duly these also.

(i) Jnan (Knowledge).

(18)20—That by which one Imperishable Being is seen in all existences, one indivisible whole in all these divisions, know thou that knowledge to be Satvic

(18)21—That knowledge which sees multiplicity of existences only in their seperateness and as distinct from one another, know thou that knowledge as Rajasic.

(18)22—That knowledge which is confined to one single effect and considers as if it were the whole, without seeing the real cause, without foundation in truth and has a narrow way of looking at things is Tamasic.

NOTE: See explanation under these Verses in Chapter XV, "Path of knowledge"

(ii) Karma (action).

(18)23.—An action which is rightly regulated, performed without attachment, liking or disliking, done without desire for fruit, is called Satvic.

(18)24—That action which is done under the domination of desire or impelled by ego-sense and with excessive effort is called Rajasic.

(18)25—That action which is undertaken through

ignorance, without regard to consequence or to loss and injury and without regard to one's capacity is called Tamasic.

(iii) Karta (doer).

(18)26—That Karta who is free from attachment and egoism, full of fixed resolution and a calm zeal and who is unmoved by success or failure is called Satvic

(18)27—That doer who is swayed by passion, who eagerly desires fruits of action, greedy, harmful, impulsive, easily elated or dejected, is called Rajasic

(18)28—The doer who is unsteady, vulgar, arrogant, deceitful, malicious, indolent, easily depressed and procrastinates is Tamasic

It will be seen that in order that a right action be performed, the doer should realize his self to be the same as the self of all and he should be free from attachment egoism, full of fixed resolution and calm zeal unmoved by results and without liking and disliking i.e. he should be desireless impersonal full of fixed resolution and zeal

### III. Naish-Karmya

Naish-Karmya is a state of mind in which the soul is not affected by the reactions of any work that we may do. Ordinarily whatever works we do leave their impressions in the sub-conscious mind and soul which again become the cause of further works. This is the cause of the soul's

bondage to works and to the soul's entanglement in the cycles of birth and death. With a Naish-Karmya state of mind this is avoided. Such works not only lead to success in worldly life but also to liberation of the soul

1. What are the conditions of Naish-karmya.

(18)49—He whose understanding is unattached in all things, he who has controlled his self and whose desires have fled, he attains by renunciation, the supreme perfection of Naish-karmya.

Thus the conditions of Naish-karmya are self-control, unattachment to works, desirelessness and renunciation or surrender of all works to the Divine

The following verses further elucidate the conditions of Naish-karmya.

(3)7—He who controls the senses by the mind and without attachment engages with the organs of action, he excels.

(3)9—Except by work done as and for sacrifice, the world is in bondage to work, therefore do work as a sacrifice, becoming free from attachment.

(3)30—Resigning all thy work to Me, with thy consciousness fixed in the Self, free from desire and egoism, fight ( i.e. do all actions in this way, even that action of fighting the battle of Kurukshetra).

(2)48—Being steadfast in Yoga, perform actions, having abandoned attachment, having become equal

stop the effect. What we should do is to control the sense-mind and then live a full active life in this world. It is in this world that we can learn to attain the state of mind called *naish karmya*. Our life as a student, as a householder, as a businessman, private or public servant, teaches us how to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of learning, for the sake of children and those dear and near to us, and for the cause of our community, country or mankind. We learn that it is only by sacrifice that we can attain peace of mind and success in our work. This world is the place where we can have opportunities every moment to learn and mould our lives on the principle of sacrifice. In fact we have come to this world for this very purpose. The world is a training ground and also a test for sacrifice. If we renounce the world, it would mean renouncing all the opportunities of learning how to sacrifice.

The Gita therefore advocates that action is better than inaction. We should always perform our allotted task that is our duty in the *naish karmya* way and this will lead to our perfection and liberation.

---

#### IV How to strive for attaining *Naish Karmya*

The first thing to realize is that we have the freedom to rise or fall. The Divine is always present in us and urges us to rise towards Him. If we control our mind and surrender ourselves to the Divine, we can rise to the Divine Status, but if we give free rein to our desires and become egoistic, we fall to the lower status of animals.

(6)5—A man should uplift himself by his own self; he should not degrade himself; for the self alone is the enemy of the self.

(6)6—For him who has conquered his (lower) self by the (higher) self, his self is a friend, but for him who is not in possession of his (higher) self, the (lower) self is as if an enemy and it acts as an enemy.

We should also realize that we have a right to action but not to fruits of action. It is open to us to adopt any line of action, but we are in the dark about the result that will accrue from it. The knowledge of our Buddha is very limited and most of the factors which produce the result are beyond our knowledge. There is therefore no use keeping the fruits that we desire as our motive. If we do so, our work will not be done properly with concentrated effort and the non-fulfilment of our desires will be a source of disappointment and worry to us. Non-attachment to fruits of action, however, has another advantage that it leads to *Nish-karmya*.

(2)47—Thou hast a right to action but never to its fruits. Let not thy motive be the fruits of thy actions, neither let there be any attachment to inactivity.

For reasons explained under III (u) we should not be attached to inaction.

The Gita now tells us that the way to control the mind is by (1) *abhyas*, constant practice and (2) *vairag*, indifference or non-attachment. In the first place we should be constantly thinking meditating and practising



control of the mind. In the second, we should not be attached in any work, but should have an attitude of indifference by a constant perception of the evil results of attachment to works.

(6)33—Arjuna said: This Yoga of the nature of equality (evenness of mind), which has been described by Thee, I see no stable foundation for it, on account of restlessness.

(6)34—For the mind is restless indeed; it is impetuous, strong and unconquerable, I deem it as hard to control it as the wind.

(6)35—The Blessed Lord said: Without doubt, the mind is restless and very difficult to restrain, but it can be controlled by abhyas (practice) and vairagya (indifference or non-attachment).

(6)36—This Yoga is difficult to attain by him who is not self-controlled, but by the self-controlled it is attainable by proper efforts.

Then the Gita gives us a series of recipes for our uplift to the Divine and gives the palm to the "Renunciation of fruits of action". This is the best course to adopt for a man of action and leads to naish-karmya.

(12)8—On Me, fix thy mind and lodge all thy understanding in Me; in Me alone shalt thou live thereafter, of this there is no doubt.

“ however thou art not able to keep thy

consciousness fixed steadily on Me, then by the practice of concentration, seek after Me.

(12)10—If thou art unable even to seek by practice, then be it thy supreme aim to do My work; doing all actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection.

(12)11—But if thou art not able to do this, then taking refuge in Me, renounce the fruit of all actions, with the self, controlled.

(12)12—Better indeed is knowledge than the practice (of concentration); better than knowledge is meditation; than meditation, renunciation of the fruit of actions; on renunciation follows peace.

The Blessed Lord first wants the whole consciousness to be lodged in the Divine. This is very difficult, for our lower nature and the force of habit prevent us from keeping our consciousness steadily on the Divine. This may however be done by practice of concentration. But only those people possessed of very strong powers of mind and of persistence, can accomplish this. Thus the next thing to do is to do all actions for the sake of the Divine, for by doing so all wordly acts will be associated with the Spirit within. Gradually the Divine light will shine on us and we will realise the Self which is the Self of all and the same as the Divine. But if the outward action occupies too much of our attention to think of the Divine within, we should renounce all desires and attachment to fruits of our action, first having controlled our mind.

# V. No Effort is Lost.

(6)37—Arjuna said : He who can not control himself, though he has faith, with the mind wandering from Yoga, failing to attain perfection in Yoga (in this life) what way does he go ?

(6)38—Does he not lose both this life (of this world) and the Brahmic (Divine) consciousness to which he aspires and falling from both perish like a rent cloud.

(6)39—Thou shouldst dispel completely this, my doubt, for there is none else than Thyself who can destroy this doubt.

(6)40—The Blessed Lord said : Neither in this life, nor in the hereafter is there destruction for him, for the doer of good, My beloved never comes to grief.

(6)41—Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and dwelling there for everlasting years, he who fell from Yoga, is again born in the home of the pure and prosperous.

(6)42—Or he may be born in the family of a wise Yogin ; indeed such a birth is very rare to obtain in the world (i e. more difficult than the one mentioned in the previous verse )

(6)43—Then he regains the ( mental ) impressions of union ( with the Divine ) which he had formed in his previous life and will thus ( as starting point ) he again strives for perfection.

(6)44—By this former practice, he is carried on

irresistably. Even the seeker after the knowledge of the Yoga, goes beyond the range of the Vedas.

Even he who only seeks for the knowledge of Yoga, goes beyond what Vedic rites can give.

(6)45—But the Yogin, striving assiduously, purified from sin, perfecting himself through many lives, attains to the highest goal.

---

## VI. Signs of Right Action.

(4)16—What is action and what is inaction, as to this even the wise are bewildered. I ( Lord Krishna ) will declare to thee what action is, knowing which thou shalt be delivered from evil.

(4)17—One has to understand what action is; also one has to understand what is wrong action, and one has to understand about inaction. Thick and tangled is the way of works.

To decide what line of action would be right is a very difficult matter. At every moment we are confronted with a variety of problems, some simple, others complex, which we have to decide at the spur of the moment. There are however some problems, in which we get time to think over and plan out the line of action to be taken. We find that in many cases our decisions were wrong and in many others, we are uncertain as to how our actions will eventually affect us.

Our success and happiness in this life depends

doing right actions and what is more right actions lead to our liberation from future births. Thus the question is of the greatest importance to us.

Prophets all over the world have laid down general principles of morality for our guidance. We have also examples of saints before us. But these can only serve as a basis for framing our civic laws or these can be applied as a basis for rules of conduct or for a scheme of education. But these cannot be applied to all the complex problems of an individual. An individual's problems depend on his own environments. His education and mental make up and so are peculiarly his own. No concrete problem of the life of a Prophet or a saint can be similar to anyone of our own problems. No principle or morality can decide one's complex problems. If we consult others we find everyone has his own opinion in the matter.

What we do in a particular case depends on two things (1) Control over sense mind. If we have no control over our sense mind we act on the basis of our desires and do not care for our conscience or judgement of Buddhi (intelligence and will). (2) If we have control over our sense mind we act according to the dictates of our Buddhi.

But the Buddhi of different people differ widely. What then is the criterion of right action? Evidently the more our Buddhi is developed in the right direction the more right will be our actions. We should expect our actions to be right when the Buddhi reaches the Satvic stage. This has been discussed in the Chapter on Buddhi.

Yoga". Here the Gita gives the characteristics of the man whose Buddhi is perfect, and who always does the right action

(4)18—He who in action can see inaction and can see action in inaction, he is wise among men ; He is a Yogi and doer of all actions

(4)19—He whose understandings are free from the will of desire, whose works are burned up in the fire of knowledge, him the wise call a sage.

(4)20—Abandoning attachment to the fruits of actions, ever satisfied, without any kind of dependence, he does nothing, though he engages in action.

(4)21—Having no desires, with heart and soul under control, giving up all possessions, performing actions by the body alone, he commits no wrong.

(4)22—He who is satisfied with whatever comes to him, who has passed beyond the dualities (liking and disliking, virtue and sin etc), is jealous of none, is equal in failure and success, he is not bound even when he acts.

There are no outward signs of a person who does right actions. The signs are inward and not outward. The Yogi who can see that there is great activity even in an inert particle of matter and who remains calm even in the midst of violent actions and remains unattached as if he were doing no action, he performs right actions. He realizes that it is the Prakriti that is doing work in a particle of matter as well as in his body and that he is not the

doer Only such a Yogi is capable of doing right actions He lives in the freedom of the soul has no desires is unattached without egoism and so is not in bondage to works Such a man cannot commit wrong Even though he slay a person his action is right because it is done according to the Divine will Outwardly he seems to do all kinds of works but he does them according to the Divine will

He is in union with the Divine He has spiritual knowledge and cannot be affected by works All the marks or impressions made by his past actions on the Soul have been obliterated for he has realised his Self which is the same as the Self of others and the Divine He is only a witness of the works of Prakriti in his body and so is not affected by works He has no desires for he is in union with the Divine Himself who pervades everywhere There is nothing that he does not possess already

He need not worry about his physical needs for these come to him without any effort on his part He has risen above the gunas of Prakriti The dualities of pleasure and pain virtue and sin the necessary accompaniments of the things of the world do not affect him He cannot be jealous because he is one with all and the Divine He does all works but is not attached to them and so such works do not leave any mark on his soul

## VII One should work even after liberation

- 1 One should work for lokasangraha (keeping together the people) after liberation

(3)17—But the man whose delight is in the Self alone and who is content with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs be done.

(3)18—He has no object in this world (to gain) by doing (an action), nor by non-performance of action, nor has he (need of) depending on any body for any object.

(3)19—Therefore without attachment, perform always the work that is to be done (for the sake of harmony between people); for by doing work without attachment, man attains to the highest.

(3)25—As those who know not, act attached to work, he who knows should act without attachment, with the object of lokasangraha.

The liberated man has nothing to gain by action or inaction. He has no personal object to gain since he is already liberated. After liberation, he works only for the good of the people, according to the Divine Will. His works are desireless, impersonal and without attachment and so not binding. He remains calm in the Akshara and also carries out works according to the Will of the Divine Person

(3)20—It was even by works that Janaka and the others attained to perfection. Thou shouldst also work for lokasangraha (harmony between people).

Janaka is often quoted as an example of the one, liberated through Karam Yoga and who continued to work



doer. Only such a Yogi is capable of doing right actions. He lives in the freedom of the soul has no desires is unattached without egoism and so is not in bondage to works. Such a man cannot commit wrong. Even though he slay a person his action is right because it is done according to the Divine will. Outwardly he seems to do all kinds of works but he does them according to the Divine will.

He is in union with the Divine. He has spiritual knowledge and cannot be affected by works. All the marks or impressions made by his past actions on the Soul have been obliterated for he has realized his Self which is the same as the Self of others and the Divine. He is only a witness of the works of Prakriti in his body and so is not affected by works. He has no desires for he is in union with the Divine Himself who pervades everywhere. There is nothing that he does not possess already.

He need not worry about his physical needs for these come to him without any effort on his part. He has risen above the gunas of Prakriti. The dualities of pleasure and pain, virtue and sin, the necessary accompaniments of the things of the world do not affect him. He cannot be jealous because he is one with all and the Divine. He does all works but is not attached to them and so such works do not leave any mark on his soul.

## VII One should work even after liberation

- 1 One should work for lokasangraha (keeping together the people) after liberation

(3)17—But the man whose delight is in the Self alone and who is content with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs be done.

(3)18—He has no object in this world ( to gain ) by doing ( an action ), nor by non-performance of action, nor has he ( need of ) depending on any body for any object.

(3)19—Therefore without attachment, perform always the work that is to be done ( for the sake of harmony between people ); for by doing work without attachment, man attains to the highest.

(3)25—As those who know not, act attached to work, he who knows should act without attachment, with the object of lokasangraha.

The liberated man has nothing to gain by action or inaction. He has no personal object to gain since he is already liberated. After liberation, he works only for the good of the people, according to the Divine Will. His works are desireless, impersonal and without attachment and so not binding. He remains calm in the Akshara and also carries out works according to the Will of the Divine Person.

(3)20—It was even by works that Janaka and the others attained to perfection. Thou shouldst also work for lokasangraha ( harmony between people ).

Janaka is often quoted as an example of the one liberated through Karam Yoga and who continued to - 2

after liberation As already explained union with the Immutable ( Akshara ) alone means abandonment of works for the Immutable is inactive and does nothing It is only when one is in union with the Purushotama that he also unites himself with the Personal aspect of the Divine and does works even as the Divine does

**(6)3—For the sage who desires to climb the hill of Yoga ( Karm Yoga ), Karma is said to be the means when he has got to the top of Yoga, Serenity (even-mindedness) becomes the cause (of Karma)**

Karma done according to the principles of Karm Yoga makes man a perfect Yogin in union with the Brahman When he is thus liberated he gains serenity or perfect equality of mind and all his works are then done with serenity according to the Divine Will This is the difference of works done before and after liberation

**(6)4—When there is no attachment either to the objects of sense or to works and he has renounced all will of desire in the mind, that man is said to have attained top of Yoga**

The works of the liberated man are done without attachment and without desire

**(3)21—What-ever the Supreme Person does, that is followed by others, whatever standard he sets, the world follows**

The great purpose of the liberated man is to set an example to the world by his words and actions As he has

the spiritual powers of the Divine and works according to the Divine Will, he becomes a leader of men and people readily follow his example. The liberated man perceives the unity of all beings and he alone is in a position to keep the separate and finite beings together, and in harmony with one another, by his example and precepts.

## 2. The example of the Divine.

(3)22—I ( the Avtar ) have no duty. I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, yet I am engaged in work.

(3)23—For if I did not abide ceaselessly in the path of action, men would in every way, follow in My wake.

(3)24—If I did not do work, these worlds would perish and I should be the cause of confusion, and destroy these people,

(4)14—Works do not taint Me, nor have I desire for the fruits of action ; he who thus knows Me is not bound by works.

(4)15—So knowing was work done by the ancient seekers after liberation ; do thou therefore also perform actions as did the ancients in olden times.

---

## VIII. Karm Yoga versus Renunciation of Works.

1. Both Karm Yoga and Renunciation of works, lead to Release.

(5)4—The ignorant speak of Renunciation ( Sankhya )

and practice of works (Yoga) as different; not the wise. He who applies well to the one, he gets the fruit of both

(5)5—The status which is attained by the Sankhya, to that the men of Yoga also arrive, who sees Sankhya and Yoga as one, he sees

A Karm Yogi renounces the desire for works and works without attachment. The Sankhyas also renounce the objects of the world. In one case the renunciation is inward only and in the other it is outward also but both lead to the same result i.e. Release

As explained further on one who renounces the world must have renounced the desire-will or must have acquired control over the mind before he can obtain Release. The difference then is only this that one leaves the world and the other does not. The latter is declared to be better than the other

## 2 Karm Yoga better than Renunciation of Works

(5)1—Arjuna said: Thou declarest to me the renunciation of works and again their performance. Which is the better way; do thou tell me decisively.

The Sankhya philosophers lay down that works should be done for attaining liberation but after liberation is achieved all works should be stopped for works cause attachment to Prakriti and so are the cause of bondage and of the cycle of birth and death. The Gita however holds that works should be performed even after liberation

is achieved, for the purpose of lokasangraha ( for the keeping of peace in the world ) but without attachment, for such works do not bind the Soul to Prakriti

(5)2—The Blessed Lord said: Renunciation of works and their performance ( on the principle of Karm Yoga i.e. without attachment, impersonally ), both bring about the soul's salvation. But of the two, Karm Yoga is better than the Renunciation of works.

(5)7—He who is trained in the Yoga of works and is pure in soul, who is master of his Self and has conquered the senses, whose Self becomes the Self of all existences, even though he does works, he is not involved in them.

### 3. Renunciation difficult without Karm Yog.

(5)6—But renunciation is difficult to attain without Karm Yoga ; the sage who is trained in Karm Yoga attains soon to the Brahman.

If we leave the world, the taste for things of the world may remain in the mind. Thus renunciation of the world, by itself is of no help unless we control the sense-mind. By practising Karm Yoga, we first control this sense-mind and then it does not matter whether we live in the world or in the jungles. Again it is only by remaining in this world that we get opportunities to learn and practice self-control. This is the object of our having been born in this world. The world is a training ground as well as a test for self-sacrifice, which is necessary for liberation. Thus

a Karm Yogin attains the Divine easily and in a more natural way than the renouncer of the world

#### 4. Who is the true Sanyasin ?

(5)3—He who neither dislikes nor desires, should be known as a Sanyasin; for free from the dualities ( of liking and disliking; virtue and sin etc. ) he is released easily and happily from bondage

Real renunciation is not to renounce the world or the objects of the world but to control the mind and renounce the desire for worldly objects. This as we have seen can be effectively done by the help of a power of higher order than the mind i.e. by the spirit or by being in union with the Divine. One who tastes the Self-delight of the spirit can have no desire for worldly objects

(6)1—The Blessed Lord said : He who does the work which he ought to do, without seeking for its fruits, he is the Sanyasin and the Yogin, not he who does not light the sacrificial fire and does not do the work.

Renunciation is really an inner attitude of mind and not the outward renunciation of the objects of the world. The latter cannot be effective without the former i.e. control over sense-mind. Renunciation does not mean, not doing our duties but doing them with a desireless unattached and impersonal state of mind

(6)2—What they call renunciation ( Sankhya ) know to be in truth Yoga ( disciplined activity ), for no one

becomes a Yogin who has not renounced the desire-will in the mind.

The essential thing is renunciation of desire-will in the mind. Once you have attained this, whether you live in the world or in seclusion is immaterial. But for reasons already explained, it is better to live in the world and work desirelessly.

(18)11—It is indeed impossible for an embodied being to abstain from work altogether. But he who gives up the fruits of actions is the renouncer ( Tyagi ).

(18)12—The three kinds of results of actions, pleasant, unpleasant and mixed, accruing in this or other worlds, are for the slaves of desire and ego ; these things do not cling to those who have renounced.

5. What works should not be renounced in any case.

(18)1—Arjuna said : I desire to know the principle of Sannyas and the principles of Tyag severally.

(18)2—The Blessed Lord said : Sages have known Sannyas, the giving up of desirable actions ; the wise declare the abandonment of fruits on all works as Tyag.

(18)3—"All actions should be given up as an evil" declare some learned men. "Acts of sacrifice, giving and penance ought not be given up", say others.

(18)4—Hear from Me, the truth about Tyag, since Tyag has been explained as threefold.



(18)5—Acts of sacrifice, giving and penance ought not to be renounced at all but should be performed, for they purify the wise

\*(18)6—Even the e actions should be performed leaving attachments and the fruit\*

## 6 The Three Kinds of Renunciation

(18)7—Verily Sannyas (renunciation) of rightly regulated actions is not proper, to renounce them from ignorance is a Tamasic renunciation

(18)8 He who gives up works because it is painful or from fear of physical suffering, is doing Rajasic Renunciation and does not gain the reward of renunciation

(18)9—He who performs a rightly regulated action because it ought to be done, without any attachment either to the action or to the fruit of the action that renunciation is regarded as Satvic

(18)10 The wise man with doubts cast away, who renounces in the light of the full Satvic Mind has no aversion to unpleasant action, no attachment to pleasant action

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Raj Yoga

The Gita has described here and there some methods of practising Raj Yoga and a modern reader unfamiliar with this system, cannot follow their significance or their relation with the rest of the teachings of the Gita. Raj Yoga is in itself a complete system for perceiving the soul, Purusha or the Divine in us, by practicing some prescribed methods of self-control, concentration and contemplation of the mind. Before practicing Raj Yoga, we want some knowledge and a standard of morality which can only be achieved by acting on the principles of Karm Yoga and by devotion to the Divine. Thus although it is a separate system, by which the Divine is perceived directly, it is bound up with the other three methods of realising the Divine.

Our mind is very restless. It is continuously at work, wandering from one subject to another. It is worked by a subtle force called Prana. All the other forces of the world such as heat, light and electricity are grosser forms of this force. Our mind has the power of drawing in the Prana from the universal stock of Prana and transform it into thought, nerve currents and force required to

move the muscles In order to control any power we must first have a knowledge of the principles according to which it works and observe its working It is only when we have gained this knowledge that we are in a position to apply the same principles to control or direct its powers into proper channels As the body is nearest to us and we can exercise the power of our mind to study the force of Prana and also to control it in the body we make our body as our field of study Once we have learnt to study Prana and control it in the body we will be in a position to control it in nature or in other living beings We should study how the outside objects affect our sense organs how impressions are passed on to nerve centres and then to the Buddhi and how the Buddhi presents them to the Purusha Having observed these we can learn to control the force of Prana in the body and then outside us But we are not doing it for exercising control over nature or over other living beings as we are then in a position to do If we do so we miss our real purpose Our purpose is to experience the Purusha and our object in acquiring control over Prana is to still the mind which is always directing our attention to external objects The mind produces a disturbance analogous to ripples in the lake of the mind stuff which prevents us to see the Purusha at the bottom For this purpose we make use of the reflex power of the mind When I talk to another person I talk and at the same time listen to what I am talking If we concentrate the mind on the mind itself the mind is perfectly stilled and we attain to super conscious state in which the Purusha is perceived in all its light and glory This direct

experience of the Purusha gives us all knowledge, and intense devotion to the Divine. We know that the Divine is Eternal, Self-conscious, All-pervading and full of the Self-delight of its being. If we maintain this contact with the Divine till death, we are freed from all the past impressions of the soul and the soul takes no birth. It joins the Reality and becomes one with it.

Before however, we are fit to practice the various exercises prescribed under Raj Yoga, we must have attained a certain standard of morality. If we proceed with the exercises, without attaining this, our exercises will either lead to no result or the power we gain will be mixed up with superstition and fanaticism which will do harm to ourselves and to the world.

For this purpose, the first step is Yama. This means perfect observance of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-receiving of any gift and continence. The second step is called Niyam and comprises cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of scriptures and self-surrender to God.

The third step is to learn Asan i.e. an easy posture for meditation. During the meditations which will follow, a good deal of activity goes on in the body especially in the spinal cord. Therefore the spinal cord, neck and head should be in one straight line. Hands and legs are so placed as to enable the Yogi to sit in meditation for a long time without feeling any fatigue. The place where meditations are practiced should be secluded from public gaze and where there is no chance of disturbance. The place

should preferably be along the bank of a stream with beautiful natural surroundings. The seat should be made of dry grass over which a deer skin is placed and over it is a soft cloth.

The fourth step is Pranayama which means controlling the Prana. This is effected by regulating movements of the muscles which cause the lungs to expand or contract and which again cause inhaling and exhaling of air. Certain exercises are prescribed which control the period of inhaling, exhaling and retention of breath so that the movements become rhythmic. These exercises tone up the whole system, improve health and give us some control over Prana.

The fifth step is Pratyahara i.e. preventing the mind from wandering. If we sit still at a place and watch the wandering of the mind, we will be surprised to note how many evil thoughts come to our mind and how it wanders from one subject to another. If we let the mind wander and watch for sometime every morning and evening, we will find that this wandering of the mind will become less and less till after a few months practice we obtain control over this wandering of the mind.

The sixth step is the Dharana. The mind is made to concentrate at one point either outside or inside us, whether visible or not. By practice we will be able to concentrate on the point and find a number of waves emanating from the mind and ending at that point.

During this and subsequent meditation we should

live alone, speak little and should not work much. We will find calming down of the nerves and a distinct improvement in health and temperament. We will hear sounds of bells and perceive little specks of light floating in the air. Our food should be simple and satvic. We should neither sleep much nor too little and live simply.

The seventh step is Dhayana or meditation. When the mind has been concentrating on a point, there comes to it the power of coalescing the different waves which flow from the mind to the point. We then perceive subtle things which could not be perceived by means of eyes. We can perceive the work of the organs, the nerve centres in the brain, of the buddhi and finally we shall have perception of the Purusha. We can watch the action of all nerve currents. This gives us knowledge of the working of the interior of our body and perfect control over senses and the mind.

The eighth and the final step is the Samadhi. When the powers of meditation are so intensified that we can reject the external parts of perception and remain meditating only on the mind itself, that state is called Samadhi or superconscious state. We are then above the gunas of Prakriti and perceive the Purusha in its full glory. It is then that the Yogi becomes All-knowledge and if this state continues till death, he becomes liberated from further birth and becomes one with the Divine.

Here are verses of the Gita which describe some of the points mentioned above.

(5)26—Yatis (who practice self mastery by Raj Yoga) who are released from desire and wrath and who have gained self-mastery and knowledge of the Self, absolute freedom ( Nirvana ) is for them here and hereafter.

(5)27-28—Shutting out all external objects, fixing the vision between the eye-brows and making even the inward and the outward breaths moving within the nostrils, the sage having controlled the senses, mind and buddhi, with liberation as the supreme goal, freed from desire, fear and wrath he is ever freed.

(6)10—Let the Yogi try constantly to concentrate his mind, remaining in solitude and alone, self controlled free from desire and possession

(6)11—He should set in a clean place his firm seat, neither too high, nor yet too low, covered with a cloth, with a deer skin, with sacred grass.

(6)12—There seated on that seat, with a concentrated mind and controlling his thought and senses, let him practice Yoga for self-purification.

(6)13—Holding the body, head and neck erect and still, looking fixedly at the tip of his of his nose, without looking around

(6)14—Serene and fearless firm in the vow of celibacy, with the mind controlled and ever thinking of Me, let him sit having Me as his supreme goal.

(6)15—Thus always keeping the mind steadfast, the

Yogi of subdued mind attains to the peace residing in Me, which culminates in Nirvana ( liberation ).

(6)16—Verily this, Yoga is not for him who eats too much or sleeps too much, nor for him who gives up sleep and food.

(6)17—To him who is temperate in eating and recreation, who is restrained in his actions, whose sleep and waking are regulated, Yoga becomes the destroyer of misery.

(6)18—When the consciousness completely controlled, rests in the Self alone, free from all desires, then, he is said to be in Yoga.

(6)19—As a lamp in a windless place flickers not, even such is the likeness of a Yogi of subdued mind, practicing union with the Self.

(6)20—That in which the mind becomes silent and still by the practice of Yoga ; that in which he beholds the Self by the Self and rejoices in the Self.

(6)21—That in which the soul knows its own truth and infinite bliss, which is perceived by the buddhi and is beyond the senses, wherein established, he no longer falls from the truth of its being.

(6)22—That on gaining which he regards that there is no other gain greater than this wherein established he is not moved even by the heaviest sorrow.

(6)23—Let that be known as Yogā; a state of severance



from the contact of pain. This Yoga should be practiced with determination, with heart undismayed.

(6)24—Abandoning all desires without exception born of the desire-will and restraining with mind all the senses on every side

(6)25—Let him gain peace gradually by means of buddhi, controlled by steadiness and having fixed the mind on the Self, let him not think of anything else

(6)26—Whenever the wavering and unsteady mind wanders away, let him control and bring it back to the control of the Self alone.

(6)27—When the mind is thoroughly quieted, passions at rest, there comes the highest bliss of the Soul that becomes the Brahman ( the Eternal and Immutable, the Akshara).

(6)28—The Yogi freed from stain ( of good and evil), putting himself constantly in Yoga, easily attains the infinite bliss of contact with the Brahman.

(6)29—He whose self is in Yoga, sees the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self, he is equal-visioned everywhere.

(8)11—I shall briefly describe to thee that state which the knowers of the Veda call the Imperishable, which ascetics freed from passion enter and for the desire of which they self-control

(8)12-13—All the doors of the senses closed, the mind

confined within the heart, drawing the Prana into the head, established in the practice of concentration, uttering the sacred syllable OM, which is Brahman (i.e. the syllable is uttered in the remembrance of the Brahman), he who departs leaving the body, attains to the Supreme Status ( of the Divine ).

(18)50—Hear from Me, how having attained perfection, one attains to the Brahman—that which is the supreme culmination of knowledge.

(18)51—Uniting the purified Buddhi ( with the Purusha in us ), controlling the body and senses with perseverance, turning away from sound and other objects of sense, abandoning liking and disliking ( the dualities ).

(18)52—Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, controlling body, speech and mind, ever engaged in meditation and concentration, possessed of dispassion.

(18)53—Forsaking egoism, power, pride, lust, wrath, property, freed from egoism, tranquil in mind, he becomes fit for becoming one with the Brahman.

### References of the Verses of the Gita in this Book

(The Gita)	This Book		(The Gita)	This Book		(The Gita)	This Book	
Ch Verse	Page		Ch Verse	Page		Ch Verse	Page	
I	1-46	16 73		26	48		3	238
				27	96		4	235
II	1-58	23 28		28	94		5	236
	39	173		29	48		6	237
	40	179		30	221		7	222 23
	41	172		31-32	116		8-9	222
	42-44	141		33	124		10-11	223
	45	174		34	127		12	169
	46	142		35	126		13	10
	47	2-5		36-39	128		14-15	63
	48	221		40-43	129		16-17	187
	49	177	IV	1-5	74		18-19	176
	50	174		6	75		20	174
	51	172		7-9	76		21-22	169
	52	178		10	188		23	170
	53	173		11	118		24-25	173
	54	179		12	117		26-28	246
	55-58	180		13	77 131			
	59	171		14	78 235	VI	1-2	238
	60	168		15	235		3-4	214
	61	171		16-17	229		5-6	225
	62-63	169		18-22	231		7	171
	64-65	170		23	173 222		8-9	176
	66	172		24-25	145		10-15	246
	67	169		26	142		16-23	247
	68	171		27	143		24-29	248
	69	179		28	144		30-31	177
	70	170		29	143		32	176
	71-72	175		30-31	144		33-36	226
				32	145		37-44	228
III	1-3	177		33-34	185		45	229
	4-6	223		35	175 189		46	177 190
	7	221		36	186		47	199
	8	178 223		37	187			
	9	221		38	188	VII	1-2	90
	10-12	138		39	116		3	91
	13-16	139		40	115		4	93
	17-20	213		41-42	187		5	91
	21	234					6	106
	22-24	77 235	V	1	236		7	61
	25	233		2	237		8-11	123

(The Gita)	This Book	(The Gita)	This Book	(The Gita)	This Book
Ch. Verse	Page	Ch. Verse	Page	Ch. Verse	Page
	12 69		19 69	XIII	1 104
	13-14 97		20-21 142		2-5 105
	15 165		22 203		6 93
	16-17 195		23-25 117		7 106
	18-19 196		26-29 200		8-12 191
	20 114		30 203		13 183
	21 118		31-33 204		14-17 184
	22 116		34 201		18-19 185
	23 117				20 94
	24-25 66	X	1-3 186		21 95
	26 67		4-5 69		22 106
	27 96		6 65		23 91
	28 97		7-8 188		24 190
	29-30 208		9 189		25-26 186
			10-11 205		27 106
VIII	1-4 212		12-18 81		28-29 190
	5 207		19-20 82		30 94
	6 107		21 83,85		31 190
	7 207		22 82,83,85		32-34 62
	8 172, 207		23-24 83,86		35 191
	9 67 207		25 84,85,86		
	10 207		26 84,87	XIV	1 4 64
	11-13 208, 248		27-29 84 86		5 96
	14-15 205		30 83,86		6-10 98
	16 206		31 84,86,87		11-14 99
	17 51		32 82,85		15-18 100
	18-19 52		33 83,85		19 107
	20 21 59		34 83,84		20-21 108
	22 200		35 85,86		22-25 109
	23-28 52,53		36-37 84		26-27 108
			38 85		
IX	1-2 60		39 83	XV	1-2 100
	3 116		40 87		3-4 101
	4-5 60		41-42 82		5 175
	6 61				6 176
	7 52	XI	1-55 149-157		7-9 92
	8 63		54-55 201		10-11 93
	9 95				12 69
	10 67	XII	1 196		
	11-12 68		2-7 198		65
	13-14 68		8-9 226		69
	15 189		10-12 227		58
	16 66		13-19 206		59
	17 68		20 49,207		189
	18 65,68				

(The Gita) This Book			(The Gita) This Book			(The Gita) This Book		
Ch	Verse	Page	Ch	Verse	Page	Ch	Verse	Page
XVI	1 6	163	XVIII	28	147		45-46	130
	7 14	164		1 4	239		47-48	126
	15 20	165		5 10	241		49	221
	21	129		11 12	239		50-53	249
	22	130		13 15	215		54	189 199
	23 24	46		16-18	217		55	199
XVII				19	218		56-58	201
	1	47		20	182 219		59-60	124
	2	114		21 22	183 219		61	125
	3	113		23 25	219		62 63	201
	4	115 160		26-28	221		64-65	202
	5-6	115		29 31	159		66	50 202
	7 10	162		32 35	160		67	49
	11 12	47 140		36 38	162		68 71	Front Page
	13	48 140		39	163			iv
	14 15	160		40	97		72 73	14
	16-22	161		41-44	131		74 75	15
	23 27	146						